6 FACTS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF HAY FEVER

INSIDE THE WORKHOUSE

BBC

HISTORY REVEALED

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

Battles, bullets and bloodshed on the World War I front line

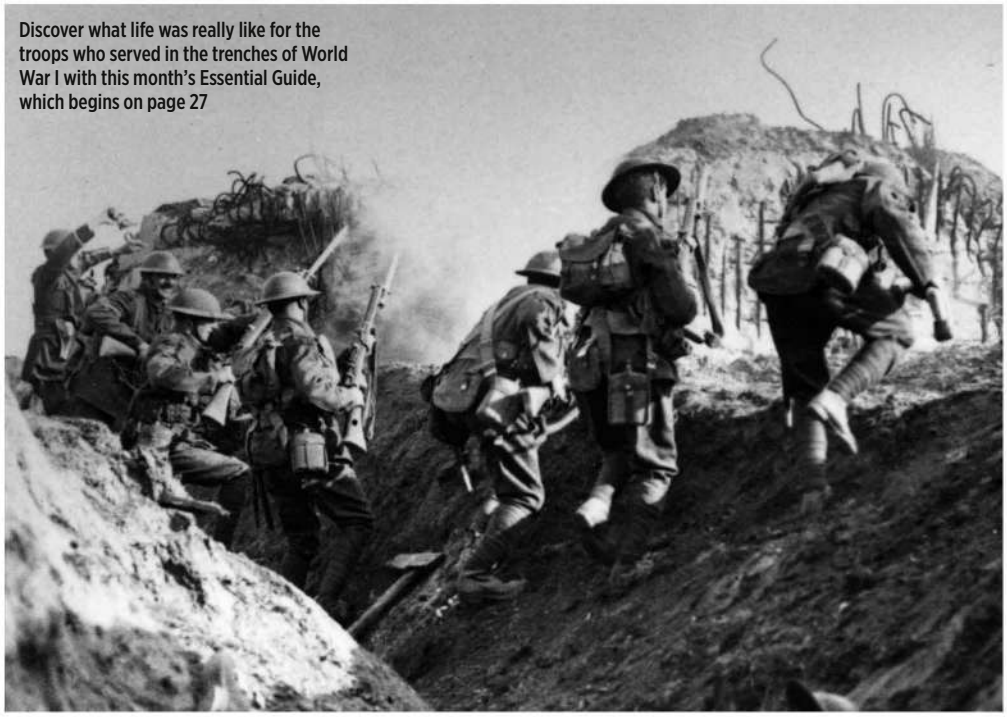
THE CRAGG VALE COINERS
YORKSHIRE'S DEADLY COUNTERFEITING GANG

PLUS What was a 'coffin torpedo'? Is there a bishop of the Moon?

9 772632 693042 22>
ISSUE 122 / JULY 2023 / £5.50

WAR THUNDER
New? GET YOUR FREE BONUS
Over 2000 historically accurate aircraft, ground vehicles and ships!
PLAY NOW FOR FREE
WARTHUNDER.COM/TANKS
Windows
STEAM
Mac
oculus
VIVE
PS4
XBOX ONE
PS5
XBOX SERIES X|S
Gaijin
12
www.pegi.info

WELCOME JULY 2023



Discover what life was really like for the troops who served in the trenches of World War I with this month's Essential Guide, which begins on page 27

For many people, the phrase 'World War I' immediately conjures up images of muddy, waterlogged trenches, barbed wire and abject misery. But what was life really like for the men – and women – who served on the Western and Eastern fronts between 1914–18? For this month's Essential Guide, **we've enlisted the help of military experts Peter Hart and Taff Gillingham to examine trench life in more detail** – from the practicalities of life below ground, to **the threat of trench raids and the horrors of the Somme**. Turn to page 27 to get started.

Elsewhere, we explore the experiences of the men, women and children who were forced to seek shelter in the workhouse during the Victorian and Edwardian eras (*page 58*). We also investigate the fascinating life of **Fulvia, the Roman woman who defied gender norms to wield political power in her own right** (*page 20*), examine what might have happened had the 18th-century War of the Spanish Succession not taken place (*page 64*), and **tell the incredible story of the Cragg Vale Coiners**, the counterfeiting gang whose criminal activities have inspired a recent BBC Two drama series (*page 51*).

Plus, in the second instalment of our new Life Hacks from History column, we **take a look at how our forebears went about building their dream home** (*page 17*), and examine one of the most famous works of art of the French Rococo period (*page 56*).

See you next month!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

Charlotte

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

19,240
The number of British deaths on the first day of the battle of the Somme: 1 July 1916

300
The number of rooms in Roman emperor Nero's 'Golden House', built in the wake of the Great Fire of Rome

44
The total number of years that the French duke Philip of Anjou ruled Spain as King Philip V

GET INVOLVED

FIND US ONLINE

Visit our online home, ***historyextra.com***, for a wealth of exciting content on British and world history, as well as an extensive archive of magazine content from *BBC History Revealed* and our sister publication *BBC History Magazine*.

HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST

Download episodes for free from iTunes and other providers, or via *historyextra.com/podcast*

CONTACT US

facebook.com/HistoryExtra
twitter.com/HistoryExtra
@HistoryExtra

EMAIL US: haveyoursay@historyrevealed.com
OR POST: Have Your Say, *BBC History Revealed*, Immediate Media, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4ST
EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES: 0117 927 9009

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:

PHONE: 03330 162 116
EMAIL: historyrevealed@buysubscriptions.com
POST: *BBC History Revealed*, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF
OVERSEAS: In the US/Canada you can contact us at: Immediate Media, PO Box 401, Williamsport, PA 17703, USA
immediatemedia@buysubscriptions.com
Toll-free 888-941-5623

GET YOUR DIGITAL COPY

Digital versions of *BBC History Revealed* are available for iOS, Kindle Fire, PC and Mac. Visit iTunes, Amazon or *zinio.com* to find out more.

USPS Identification Statement
BBC History Revealed (ISSN 2632-6930) (USPS 022-450) July 2023 is published 13 times a year (monthly, with a Christmas issue in December) by Immediate Media Company London Limited, Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, Hammersmith, London, W6 7BT, UK. Distributed in the US by NPS Media Group, 2 Enterprise Drive, Suite 420, Shelton, CT 06484. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *BBC History Revealed*, PO Box 401, Williamsport, PA 17703, USA

COVER: GETTY IMAGES X10, ALAMY X2/ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES X1, JENI NOTT X1

CONTENTS JULY 2023

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

28 Everything you wanted to know about life in the trenches
Peter Hart answers key questions about trench warfare during World War I – and dispels a few myths along the way

32 A dismal existence
Discover how soldiers learned to cope with disease, boredom and the overhanging threat of death

36 Shrapnel, shell-shock and shattered defences
Learn about the conflict's tactics and weaponry

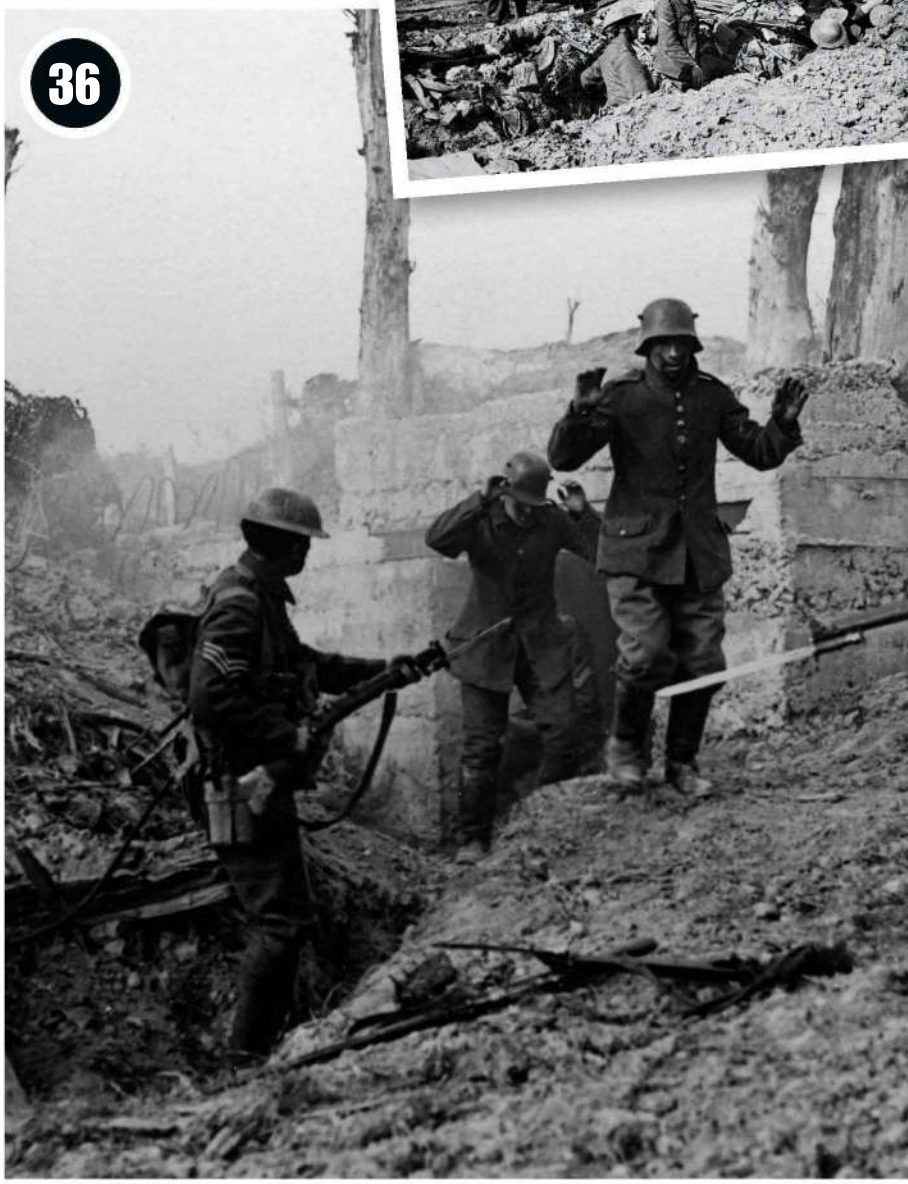
39 Hell on earth
Uncover the real story behind the battle of the Somme and its complicated legacy today

42 Trench life through a lens
We showcase some of the most evocative photographs of everyday life in the trenches

46 Sisters in arms
Meet the brave women who helped the war effort

48 Opinion
Peter Hart shares his views on the evolution of trench warfare, and why certain clichés have prevailed

49 Get hooked
Take your knowledge further with our pick of the best books, podcasts and TV programmes to explore next



▲ Learn how World War I reshaped military tactics – and led to the development of noxious new weaponry

FEATURES

24 6 things you (probably) didn't know about hay fever history
Find out how past generations dealt with the problems caused by pollen

51 The Yorkshire coin conspiracy
We look at the fascinating true story underpinning new BBC Two drama series *The Gallows Pole*

56 What Great Paintings Say: The Swing
Jean-Honoré Fragonard's dreamlike masterpiece examined

58 Hard times
Delve into the bleak world of the Victorian and Edwardian workhouse

64 What if... Charles II of Spain had produced an heir?

▲ From imbibing mercury to smoking tobacco, discover some of history's oddest hay fever 'cures'

GETTY IMAGES X9, ALAMY X3

39

◀ Find out how bold new innovations, such as the introduction of tanks, fared under the enemy's relentless firepower

42

▲ Marvel at snapshots of everyday life in the trenches

28

▲ Trench warfare's most common myths debunked

32

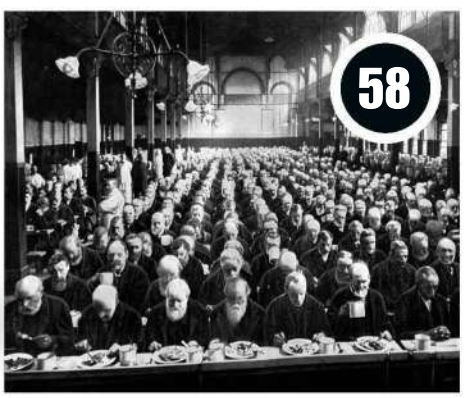
▲ Find out how soldiers spent their free time

46

▲ What role did women play in trench warfare?

51

▲ Meet the dastardly gang who nearly bankrupted 18th-century Britain



58

▲ Meagre meals and menial tasks: everyday workhouse life in pictures

EVERY MONTH

6 Snapshots
Native Americans visit the UN, and more

12 Things We've Learned This Month
Changes to school history textbooks spark controversy in India, and more

14 This Month in History
July anniversaries, births and deaths

17 Life Hacks from History
From caves to palaces, Justin Pollard examines luxury homes through time

18 In a Nutshell
Æthelstan's foundation of England explained

20 Spotlight on... Roman power broker Fulvia
Meet the woman who shook ancient Rome

67 Q&A
Where are Panama hats actually from? This, and other historical conundrums answered

73 TV, Film & Radio
This month's history entertainment

76 Books & Podcasts
The latest historical releases and podcasts

78 On the HistoryExtra Podcast
Our very best episodes about the Tudors

79 Prize Crossword

80 Letters

81 Next Issue

82 Photo Finish

22

LIKE IT? SUBSCRIBE!

GET 32% OFF THE SHOP PRICE

SNAPSHOTS

1949 UNITED NATIONS

With the Chrysler Building looming behind them, the six chiefs of the Iroquois Confederacy take in the sights of Manhattan during the dedication of the cornerstone of the United Nations' Secretariat Building. Believed to be the oldest continuous participatory 'democracy' on Earth, the confederacy unites the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora nations; their Great Law of Peace reputedly influenced the US Constitution. The chiefs' presence that day was a potent display of indigenous heritage that resonated with a new era of global cooperation and acknowledged the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the world stage.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

1975
TAKE FLIGHT!

Partially shrouded by a cloud of dust, two US Chinook helicopters take part in a hasty bid to evacuate South Vietnamese personnel from Xuan Loc during the dying days of the Vietnam War. For nearly two weeks, the town had been at the centre of intense fighting as North Vietnamese forces attempted to capture the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), which lay further west. But despite their best efforts, the defenders were forced to abandon Xuan Loc to their communist opponents on 21 April 1975. Nine days later, North Vietnamese troops entered Saigon in the face of only minor resistance, bringing the near 20-year conflict to an end.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

1928
RITE OF PASSAGE

A group of *maiko* – apprentice geisha – enjoy a trip on one of Kyoto's canals aboard a *takasebune*, a flat-bottomed boat similar to a punt. Known for their exquisite kimonos and immaculately styled hair, *maiko* typically begin their apprenticeships between the ages of 17 and 20, learning to perform songs, conduct tea ceremonies and play instruments such as the three-stringed *shamisen* as part of hospitality rituals – notably in Kyoto, Japan's ancient former capital. Around the time that this photograph was taken, there were some 80,000 geisha (meaning 'art person') working in Japan; only about a thousand continue the tradition today.

GETTY IMAGES

THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

India's Mughal emperors ruled over vast swathes of the subcontinent for centuries. Here, Jahangir is depicted admiring a portrait of his father, Akbar the Great

An Indian police officer surveys the aftermath of the train fire that set off the Gujarat riots in February 2002

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu nationalist in 1948

CHANGES TO SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS IGNITE DEBATE IN INDIA

The removal of material about the Mughal empire from Indian school textbooks has led to accusations that the country's government is attempting to "rewrite history". The national organisation that oversees changes to the curriculum claims that the deletion is part of "rationalisation" efforts aimed at easing students' workloads. However, critics argue that the decision is the result of pressure from right-wing Hindu nationalists, who view the Mughal rulers as foreign invaders who plundered Indian lands. Also removed were certain references to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, as well as the 2002 Gujarat riots, which saw three days of sectarian violence between Muslim and Hindu communities.

GETTY X4, NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES X1, TOM CARLILL X1, QUATREFOIL X2

RUTLAND VILLAGE TO RETURN SOMME CRUCIFIX AFTER 107 YEARS

A crucifix retrieved from a village destroyed during the battle of the Somme is set to be returned to France. The small wooden cross, which belonged to the church of Doingt-Flamicourt, near Amiens, was purportedly rescued by a British Army chaplain in 1916 and later placed in All Saints Church in Tinwell, Rutland. As a gesture of peace and friendship, a delegation of Tinwell residents will travel to the rebuilt village of Doingt-Flamicourt in June, where the 56cm cross will be repatriated in a formal handover ceremony.

CAERNARFON CASTLE RECEIVES MULTI-MILLION POUND REVAMP

A £5m project to improve visitor facilities at Caernarfon Castle has been completed after three years. The revamp, supported by the Welsh government and the European Regional Development Fund, has seen the creation of a new café, flooring, rooftop deck and lift, providing access to areas of the landmark that were previously hidden from view. New multimedia exhibits designed under the theme 'The Hands that Built the Castle' have also been installed, highlighting the contributions of the ordinary Welsh craftspeople who created the fortress.

HISTORIC NATIONAL TRUST STATUE VANDALISED WITH CRAYON

Staff at a National Trust property in Worcestershire were left "dismayed" after a 230-year-old statue in its grounds was found to have been vandalised. The sculpture (*pictured right*), which depicts the Roman water nymph Sabrina, was found covered in bright blue crayon markings on 8 April, during Croome Court's visitor opening hours. Although the statue has since been cleaned, work is still taking place to restore a memorial to the landscape architect Capability Brown, which was also defaced by the unknown vandal.

207

The age, in years, of the oldest-surviving British royal wedding dress, currently on display at Buckingham Palace

BLUE PLAQUE PAYS TRIBUTE TO SUTTON HOO ARCHAEOLOGIST

The archaeologist Basil Brown (1888–1977), famed for his discoveries at Sutton Hoo, has been commemorated with a blue plaque outside his Suffolk home. The circular sign, which now adorns the front of Brown's former house in Rickinghall, was installed thanks to the efforts of Quatrefoil, a volunteer history group that carries out research into local villages. In 1938, Brown unearthed a wealth of Anglo-Saxon treasures in fields belonging to landowner Edith Pretty – a story that was dramatised in the 2021 Netflix film, *The Dig*.

MAIN: **The idea for the plaque came from members of the local history organisation Quatrefoil – seen here posing with the finished product**

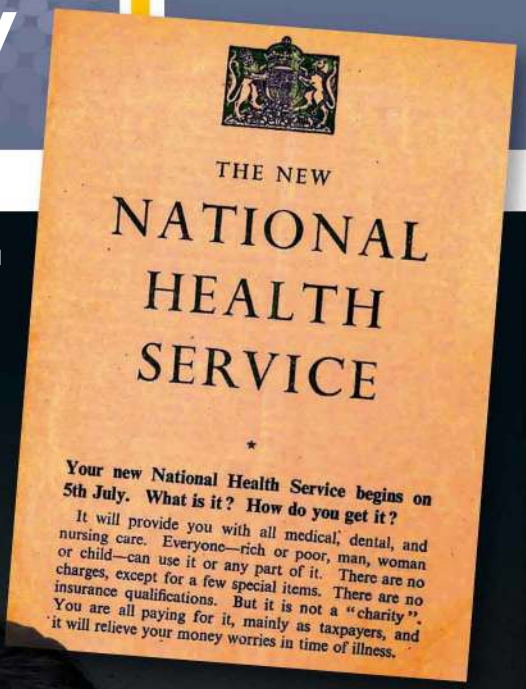
LEFT: **The circular sign now adorns the front of the house in Rickinghall that was the archaeologist's home for more than four decades**

5 JULY 1948
THE NHS IS FOUNDED

Aneurin Bevan, the UK's minister of health, officially launches the new National Health Service (NHS) at Park Hospital in Davyhulme, near Manchester. Funded by taxpayers, the service enables Britons to access medical treatment regardless of their financial circumstances. The momentous occasion comes less than six years after the publication of the government report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (more commonly known as the Beveridge Report, after its author, William Beveridge), which recommends the creation of a publicly funded health service as part of a wider set of social reforms. The election of Clement Attlee's Labour government in July 1945, at the end of World War II, allows these plans to be put into action, and leads to the launch of the NHS three years later.

MAIN: **In 1948, the NHS provided lifesaving healthcare to the British public for the first time; here, a GP administers an injection to a child**

RIGHT: **A Ministry of Health pamphlet published ahead of the launch, carefully outlining how the service was intended to work**



THE NEW
NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

*

Your new National Health Service begins on 5th July. What is it? How do you get it?

It will provide you with all medical, dental, and nursing care. Everyone—rich or poor, man, woman or child—can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, except for a few special items. There are no insurance qualifications. But it is not a "charity". You are all paying for it, mainly as taxpayers, and it will relieve your money worries in time of illness.

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X3

12 JULY 1561
ST BASIL'S CATHEDRAL IS CONSECRATED

Muscovites gather to witness the consecration of a new stone church dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Built of the same white stone as the nearby Kremlin and its cathedrals, its nine golden domes dominate the city skyline. Commemorating Ivan the Terrible's military victories over the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, the structure replaces a pre-existing ensemble of wooden chapels, each built in honour of notable battles. Although the architect's identity is a mystery, rumours that Ivan has had them blinded to prevent anything else being built to rival it are likely false.

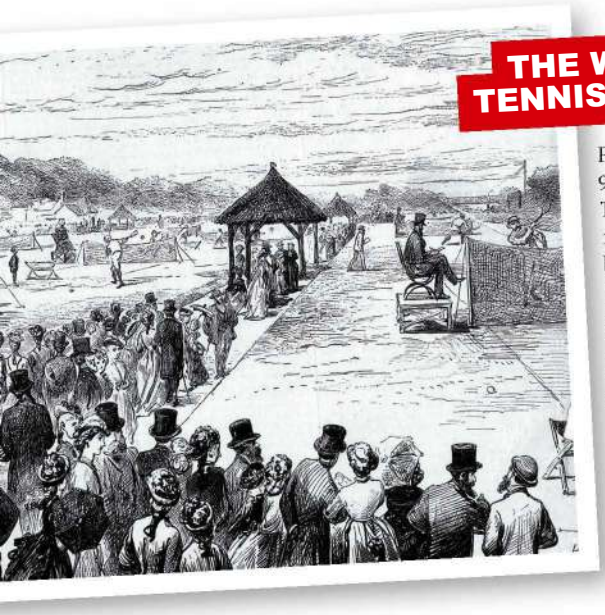
The cathedral comes to acquire several names over the years, but it eventually becomes synonymous with Saint Basil, a 'holy fool' in Eastern Orthodoxy who is buried within its precincts. Later, from the 1680s until the mid-19th century, the building gradually acquires its vivid colour scheme.

28 JULY 1794
ROBESPIERRE LOSES HIS HEAD

In a dramatic change of fortunes, the chief architect of the French Revolution's bloody Reign of Terror, Maximilien Robespierre, loses his grip on power.

His downfall is remarkably swift: on 26 July (or 8 Thermidor, according to the French Republican Calendar), deputies of France's National Convention, alarmed by Robespierre's paranoid speech about internal enemies among them, and fearing a general purge, move to overthrow him. The next day, deputies begin jeering and openly denounce him as a tyrant. Along with his brother and several comrades, Robespierre is sent to prison, only for the warden to refuse his incarceration.

Declared outlaws by the Convention, a militia is dispatched to detain Robespierre and his allies at the Hôtel de Ville. During a fracas in the early hours of 28 July, his jaw is shattered, either through a botched suicide attempt or while evading capture. Condemned to execution by guillotine on the Place de la Révolution, he makes for a pitiful sight later that morning. After the executioner removes the bandage holding his jaw together, Robespierre's life is extinguished by the falling blade.



9 JULY 1877
THE WORLD'S FIRST LAWN TENNIS TOURNAMENT BEGINS

Following a notice in *The Field* magazine on 9 June 1877, the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon hosts "a lawn tennis meeting" open to "all amateurs". Assured that balls will be dispensed by the club gardener, players are nonetheless forewarned to bring their own rackets and "shoes without heels". In total, 22 men accept the offer (women are forbidden from participating), paying a £1 and 1 shilling entry fee to take part.

Facilities at the club's venue on Worple Road are basic, featuring only a temporary three-plank stand capable of accommodating 30 people. But the final still attracts 200 spectators, with Spencer Gore winning the tournament's first title.

DIED: 4 JULY 1826
THOMAS JEFFERSON

The third president of the United States passes away at home on the 50th anniversary of American independence. By coincidence, the second president – John Adams – dies of a heart attack hours later, unaware of his friend's demise.

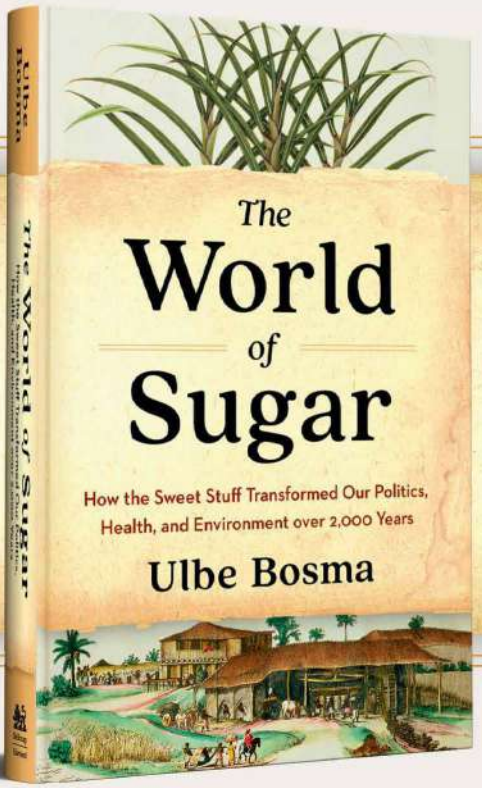
BORN: 28 JULY 1866
BEATRIX POTTER

The English writer, illustrator, and natural scientist is born in London. Her deep connection to nature and lifelong love of animals fuels her creativity, eventually leading to the creation of one of literature's most beloved characters, Peter Rabbit, when she is just 27 years old.

"This is a comprehensive and alarming look at how one commodity changed the world."—*Publishers Weekly*

"This book is global history at its best."

—Sven Beckert, author of *Empire of Cotton*



"Remarkably researched, comprehensive, and indispensable."

—Gary Taubes, author of *The Case Against Sugar*

Harvard University Press

Belknap Press | hup.harvard.edu

ANCIENT ORIGINS TOURS

18 to 29 August 2023

Ancient Greece

An Unforgettable Experience of Hellenic Heritage

JOIN ANCIENT ORIGINS' EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF ANCIENT GREECE.
HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

£3.795

- Athens · Marathon · Eleusis (2023 Culture Capital of Europe)
- Oracle of Delphi · Meteora Monasteries · Olympia
- Mycenae · Palace of Agamemnon
- Ancient Corinth and Corinth canal

OPTIONAL PLUS:
Palace of Knossos on Crete and ancient Akrotiri on Santorini

- Financial trust account protection for all clients
- Arrival transfers for all clients
- Accommodation on 4 and 5 star hotels
- Breakfast and lunch on all days (except arrival and departure)
- Professional local tour guide/escort
- Tour leader
- Transportation on AC buses
- Museum and site entrance fees
- Optional 6-day extension to Crete and Santorini

BOOK NOW AT:
www.ancient-origins.net/ao-tours

LIFE HACK #02

Build a dream home

Fancy upgrading your three-bedroom semi to an 8,707-room palace complex? **Justin Pollard** reveals his top tips for constructing a luxury dwelling that your ancestors would be proud of

We humans have always wanted a home, from the rock shelters of the palaeolithic period to the mansions of modern oligarchs – the main difference being that rock shelters were often more tastefully decorated. But there's a difference between a house and a dream home.

If we want something really special, we could take a leaf out of the Roman emperor Nero's book. Following the Great Fire of Rome in AD 64, he took the opportunity to level part of the city and build the Domus Aurea – the 'Golden House'. Taking a personal interest in every aspect of the design, Nero turned a 300-acre site in the middle of the city into a private pleasure ground, with sheep pastures, an artificial lake, a 300-room pavilion for entertainment and, of course, a 30-metre colossal statue of himself. That's all before we get to the actual palace with its revolving dining room. According to the Roman historian Suetonius, when it was finished Nero proudly announced "that he had at last begun to live like a human being".

If money is no option, then why not follow the Yongle Emperor's example? His Forbidden City (*left*), completed in 1420, took 14 years to build

JUST A FAÇADE

Poorer Romans also got in on the dream home act. While in Britain the wealthy built their own, drafty palaces in true Roman style – like the one at Fishbourne, West Sussex – more modest dreamers simply put a Roman-style square frontage on their roundhouse. This form of dream-home cheating re-emerged in the Georgian period when owners unable to afford a fancy villa simply stuck a classical façade on their medieval building. This made them instantly fashionable – as long as no one went indoors.

For our medieval predecessors, even the rich found that security was often more important than comfort, so most castles could hardly be considered dream homes – unless your dream was conquering a nation, in which case Edward I could claim to have had a lovely series of dream homes in north Wales.

True dream homes in Europe would have to wait for the Renaissance when, feeling a shade more secure, the ruling classes could finally turn their attentions to palaces and stately homes. In China, palaces had been *de rigueur* for some time. The country's most famous luxury home is the Forbidden City, built for the Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, which has no fewer than 8,707 rooms.

This poses an interesting question: how big does a dream home need to be to be comfortable? Was the Forbidden City too big? Certainly Frederick the Great of Prussia thought so. When he built Sanssouci, his dream home at Potsdam, it had only 10 formal rooms, making it even smaller than Ludwig II of Bavaria's fantasy castle at Neuschwanstein. Designed by a stage designer rather than an architect, Neuschwanstein included a grotto, artificial waterfall and a rainbow-making machine – essentials for any eccentric autocrat. In the end, only 14 of the planned 200 rooms were finished before Ludwig was mysteriously found dead in a local lake alongside his psychiatrist.

NOT-SO PUBLIC PROPERTY

Of course, it's not just monarchs who can dream. What about dream homes for the people? That was the idea behind the Bauhaus-inspired Narkomfin building in Moscow, begun in 1928, which was designed so that the newly collectivised workforce could enjoy a shared eating and entertaining space while using their tiny personal apartments for sleep and study. Well, not quite all. The penthouse that was meant to be a communal recreational space instead became the private luxury apartment of the building's sponsor, Commissar of Finance Nikolay Alexandrovich Milyutin.

JUSTIN POLLARD is an acclaimed historian and writer. As a historical consultant he has worked on more than 50 film and TV projects, from *Elizabeth* and *Mulan* to the BBC quiz show *QI*

GETTY IMAGES X3

Æthelstan and the foundation of England

Danny Bird reveals everything you need to know about the Anglo-Saxon ruler regarded as the first true 'King of the English' – from his battlefield achievements to his political reforms

WHO WAS ÆTHELSTAN?

Born around AD 894, Æthelstan was a member of the royal House of Wessex – a grandson of Alfred the Great and son of Edward the Elder. Though there is some debate among historians, it is believed that Alfred may have preferred Æthelstan to succeed him as king; indeed, writing two centuries later, the Anglo-Norman chronicler William of Malmesbury recorded that Alfred conferred upon his infant grandson a scarlet cloak, a bejewelled belt and a sword with a gilded scabbard during an elaborate ceremony, perhaps indicating his designs for the dynasty after his death.

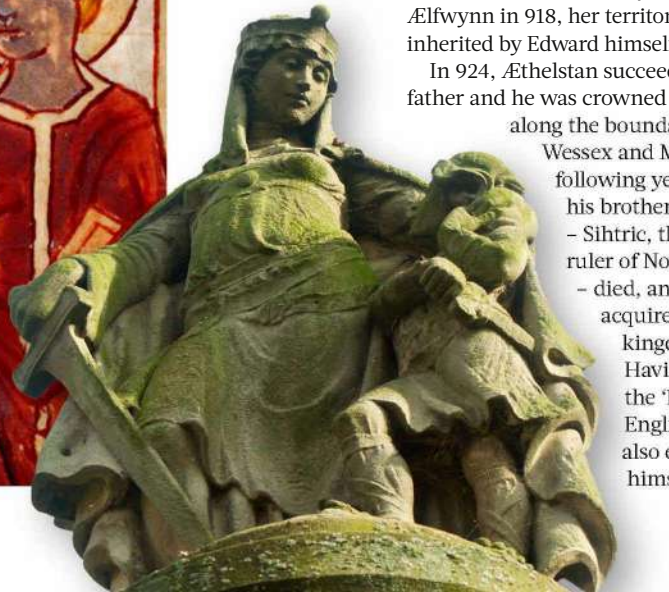
However, when Æthelstan's father ascended the throne in 899, his stepmother advanced the interests of her own sons, leading to a sudden shift in Æthelstan's standing. At some point in his childhood he was fostered by his paternal aunt Æthelflæd, the queen consort and later ruler of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia.

WHAT KIND OF WORLD DID ÆTHELSTAN GROW UP IN?

In the centuries following the decline of Roman rule in Britain, a series of kingdoms had arisen across what is now England, including Mercia, Northumbria and Wessex. By the early ninth century, Wessex had become the most influential of these kingdoms to such an extent that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* described King Ecgberht as *bretwalda* ('wide ruler') of the Anglo-Saxons.

However, Vikings from Scandinavia began raiding the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the late eighth century and soon settled in the north and east of the British mainland. In early 878, the Vikings won an important victory over Alfred the Great at the battle of Chippenham, but he regrouped and defeated them at nearby Edington, before converting them to Christianity. By the end of the ninth century, the House of Wessex had established a relatively unified realm, but the eastern half of southern Britain remained under Danish control at the time of Alfred's death in 899.

LEFT: **This 10th-century image, which shows Æthelstan presenting Saint Cuthbert with a book, is the earliest-known painted portrait of an English king**



BELOW: **A statue in Tamworth depicts a young Æthelstan with his aunt, Æthelflæd – 'Lady of the Mercians'**

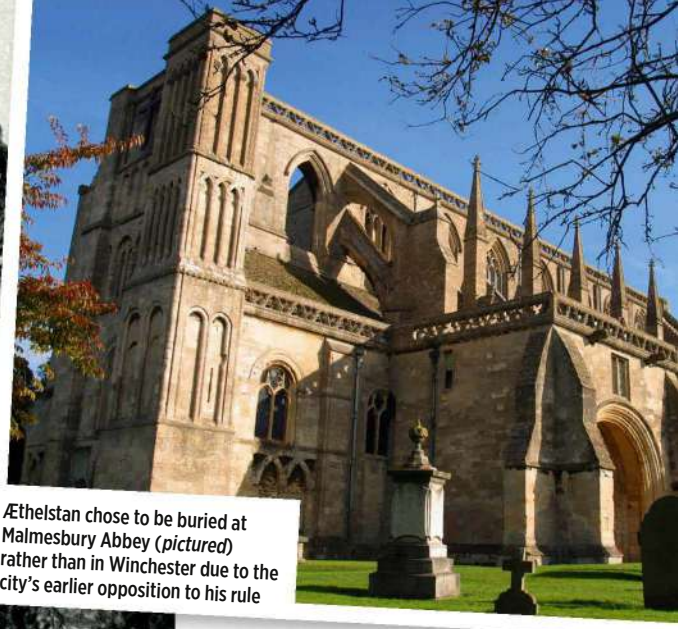
WHEN DID ÆTHELSTAN BECOME KING?

Æthelstan's upbringing in his aunt's court proved instrumental to his later success. Following her husband's death in 911, Æthelflæd had been accepted by the Mercians as their ruler. A shrewd political and military strategist, she worked alongside her brother Edward (Æthelstan's father) to rout the Danes. In the year before her own passing, she had procured Viking York's allegiance, and after a brief succession by her daughter Ælfwynn in 918, her territories were inherited by Edward himself.

In 924, Æthelstan succeeded his father and he was crowned in Kingston, along the boundary of Wessex and Mercia, the following year. In 927, his brother-in-law – Sihtric, the Viking ruler of Northumbria – died, and Æthelstan acquired that kingdom, too. Having become the 'King of the English', he also established himself as the

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X3

The battle of Brunanburh saw Æthelstan and his troops defeat armies led by the kings of Dublin, Scotland and Strathclyde



Æthelstan chose to be buried at Malmesbury Abbey (*pictured*) rather than in Winchester due to the city's earlier opposition to his rule

overlord of Britain, receiving tribute from the Welsh, the Scots and the kingdom of Strathclyde.

HOW IMPORTANT WAS THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH TO ÆTHELSTAN'S REIGN?

Æthelstan's enemies spent the next decade building a coalition against him. Matters came to a head in 937 when the armies of Constantine II of Scotland, Owain of Strathclyde and Olaf Guthfrithson of Dublin clashed with Æthelstan's army at the battle of Brunanburh in northern England.

Often associated with Bromborough on the Wirral, the battlefield's precise location has in fact been lost to history. However, the historian Michael Wood has suggested that the medieval sources point to Went Hill, an area south of York along the Great North Road. It's a theory based on the little-known, alternative Northumbrian name for the battle: Wendun.

Lasting a full day, the fighting at Brunanburh was ferocious, with both sides suffering heavy losses. Ultimately, though, Æthelstan's forces emerged victorious, securing his supremacy over the island. It marked a turning point in Anglo-Saxon history, paving the way for the unification of England under the rule of the House of Wessex and securing Æthelstan's status as the de facto *Rex totius Britanniae* ('King of the whole of Britain').

WHAT DID ÆTHELSTAN ACHIEVE AS KING?

Having unified the Anglo-Saxons under his kingship, the cultural and political customs that developed at this time proved fundamental to the nascent English state. There not only emerged a distinct 'English' identity through the promotion of the English language and literature, but his court became a centre of learning, patronising the arts and overseeing a thriving culture of manuscript production.

> "Lasting a full day, the fighting at Brunanburh was ferocious, with both sides taking heavy losses"

Importantly, the system of government became centralised in the king's hands, with a network of royal officials responsible for collecting taxes, enforcing laws and maintaining order throughout the kingdom set up under his rule. Meanwhile, bishops, ealdormen (high-ranking law enforcers) and local magnates routinely assembled at the king's councils, taking stock of the realm in what has been described as a rudimentary 'parliament'. But Æthelstan's achievements weren't purely domestic: as a skilled diplomat, he also forged alliances with his European counterparts, too.

Crucially, Æthelstan was a devout Christian who was committed to promoting the Church's interests. His concern for clemency and legal propriety in accordance with his faith inspired him to raise the age at which a child could be executed for petty theft from 10 to 15, while his reign also saw the foundation of several churches and monasteries. In addition, he worked to standardise the Church's liturgy, and endorsed the use of the English language in religious services.

WHAT WAS ÆTHELSTAN'S LEGACY?

Æthelstan died in Gloucester in 939 and, in a break with the tradition of his dynasty, was buried in Malmesbury Abbey. He never married or produced an heir, but his profound achievements endured. Just over a century later, when the Norman Conquest marked the end of Anglo-Saxon rule, William of Normandy won a kingdom whose cohesion was the product of Æthelstan's remarkable statecraft. Later eclipsed by his grandfather, he was 'rediscovered' in the late 20th century and acknowledged as the true unifier of England.

TRY 3 ISSUES FOR £5*

+ Get **free access to HistoryExtra.com worth £34.99**, where you can listen to the ad-free HistoryExtra podcast and much more

www.buysubscriptions.com/HRP122
03330 162 115† **Quote code HRP122**
Scan the QR code with your phone

*Offer open to new UK customers subscribing to the print edition only. We reserve the right to reject or cancel subscriptions at any point. For more T&Cs go to **buysubscriptions.com/our-services/terms-and-conditions**

GET HOOKED

LISTEN
Historian and broadcaster Michael Wood delves into the life of Æthelstan on a recent episode of the *HistoryExtra* podcast: *historyextra.com/aethelstan-pod*

Fulvia: the power broker of ancient Rome

As the wife of three successive political heavyweights, Fulvia attained a level of influence that few Roman women could have dreamed of. But is her legacy as a cruel opportunist entirely fair? **Danny Bird** reveals all...

After Marcus Tullius Cicero, the great orator and defender of Roman republicanism, was murdered in 43 BC by agents loyal to Mark Antony, his killers delivered his severed head and hands to Rome. There, they were displayed on the speaker's rostrum in the Forum after Antony's wife, Fulvia, came to gloat over the gruesome spectacle. Removing the pins from her hair, she repeatedly stabbed Cicero's now-still tongue – symbolically silencing the man whose eloquence had done so much damage to her husband's standing, as well as her own honour. Or so the story goes...

Fulvia's life has become entwined in the story of Rome's transition to one-man rule. Born to Marcus Fulvius Bambalio and Sempronia during the twilight years of the Roman Republic, she was a scion of two of the city's most respected and wealthiest *plebeian* families – part of the general citizenry, as opposed to the privileged patrician class. At a time when politics was a male vocation, Fulvia's innate political instincts distinguished her as an outlier during some of the Republic's most climactic events.

TROUBLE AND STRIFE

Fulvia initially gained prominence through her marriage to Publius Clodius Pulcher, an ambitious demagogue who appealed to the plebeians. When he was killed in 52 BC by associates of his political rival, Titus Annius Milo, Fulvia had his bloodied corpse displayed in the street, whipping up a mob of his supporters and sparking Milo's exile.

After the customary 10-month mourning period, Fulvia married Gaius Scribonius Curio. Having maintained the loyalty of her first husband's plebeian support base, she soon mobilised it around Curio's own political aspirations. But it was amid the geopolitical turmoil unleashed by Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon in 49 BC that Curio's – and thus Fulvia's – fortunes soared as the couple aligned their ambitions with Caesar's.

Fulvia was the first non-mythological woman to appear on Roman coinage – a testament to the power that she held

However, Curio's death during the battle of Bagradas in North Africa later that year stymied Fulvia's machinations. Widowed once more, she likely remained in Rome with her children. Fulvia's status as a wealthy widow and power broker in the capital made her both a force to be reckoned with and an object of desire. Within five years of Curio's death, she married Mark Antony, Caesar's right-hand man.

Hot-headed Antony's fortunes were boosted by Fulvia's aptitude for political intrigue. However, their relationship soon became the subject of scurrilous gossip among Caesar's adversaries. In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination by a group of senators in 44 BC, Cicero's dismay over the survival of Antony – who had been discussed as another target on the fateful Ides of March (15 March) – turned polemical. Within the 14 speeches known as the Philippics, Cicero excoriated Antony and accused him of having conducted an affair with Fulvia that had begun during her first marriage.

Despite Cicero's campaign, Antony's closeness to Caesar – coupled with the financial and populist clout that Fulvia lent him – had made them Rome's ultimate power couple. In 43 BC, General Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Caesar's named heir, Octavian, formed a triumvirate with Antony. To cement the alliance, Claudia – Fulvia's daughter by Clodius – was married to Octavian. While Antony and Octavian stalked Caesar's assassins in Greece, Fulvia was left to preside over the day-to-day politics of Rome.

A VERBAL ASSAULT

Once Caesar's assassins had been vanquished, the triumvirs partitioned the Roman world between themselves. Antony claimed dominion over the eastern Mediterranean, launching a passionate affair with Egypt's queen, Cleopatra VII. Meanwhile, Fulvia became rankled by Octavian's control of Italy. Recognising his monstrous ambitions as a direct threat to her own – and perhaps seeking to lure Antony back from Alexandria – in 41 BC she helped foment civil war. In league with her brother-in-law, Lucius Antonius, Fulvia rallied legions to seize Perusia (now Perugia) and Praeneste (Palestrina).

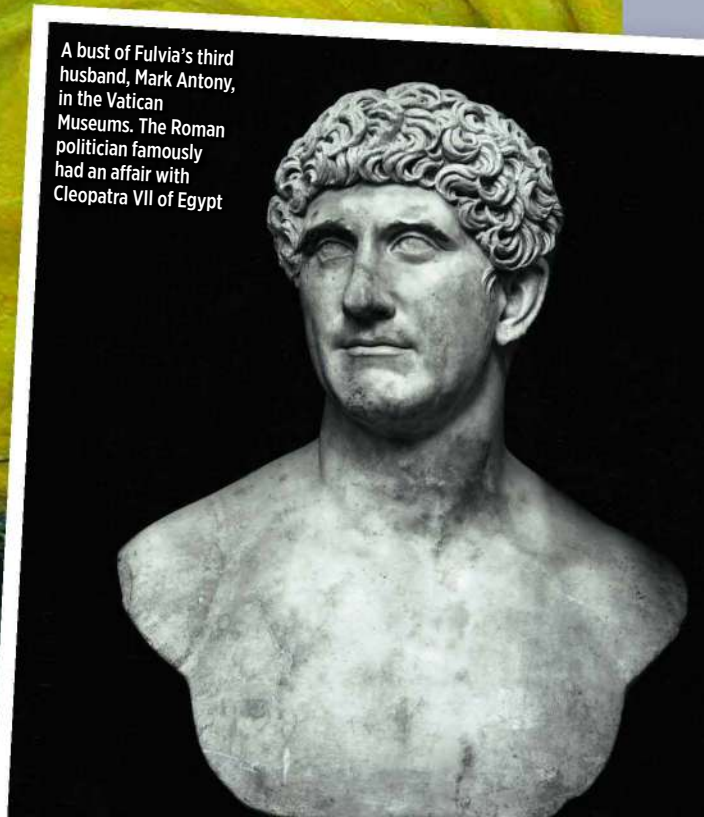
Octavian besieged Perusia, which surrendered after sling projectiles engraved with scornful words aimed at Fulvia were hurled at the city. Absconding to Greece, she reunited with a furious Antony, who soon departed to deal with Octavian. Abandoned in Sicyon, near Corinth, Fulvia died in 40 BC of an unknown illness. Antony reconciled with Octavian and married his sister, Octavia Minor, the two men conspiring to scapegoat Fulvia as the cause of their quarrel.

Both in life and death, Fulvia faced relentless criticism, painted as an androgynous interloper who defied Roman norms. Like Cleopatra after her, the sway she held over men such as Antony fuelled misogynistic propaganda. The fact that Fulvia was the first living woman (albeit depicted as the goddess, Libertas) to appear on Roman coinage is an enduring testament to her influence on the city's political life.

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2

An 1898 painting by Pavel Svedomsky depicts Fulvia gleefully posing with Cicero's severed head. Whether or not she actually pierced the dead statesman's tongue with hairpins is the subject of debate

"Both in life and death, Fulvia faced relentless criticism, painted as an androgynous interloper who defied Roman norms"



A bust of Fulvia's third husband, Mark Antony, in the Vatican Museums. The Roman politician famously had an affair with Cleopatra VII of Egypt

BBC HISTORY REVEALED

HRP122

YOU MAY PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please complete the order form and send to:
FREEPOST IMMEDIATE MEDIA *(please write in capitals)*

☐ I wish to receive my ONE book when I subscribe to *BBC History Revealed**
☐ **OPTION 1:** ***Anne Boleyn & Elizabeth I by Tracy Borman** (signed)*** – worth £25
☐ **OPTION 2:** ***UPROAR! By Alice Loxton (signed bookplate)*** – worth £25
☐ **OPTION 3:** ***The Windsors at War: The Nazi Threat to the Crown by Alexander Larman (signed)*** – worth £25
☐ **OPTION 4:** ***Henry III: Reform, Rebellion, Civil War, Settlement, 1259–1272 by David Carpenter (signed)**** – worth £30
☐ **OPTION 5:** ***King: The Life of Martin Luther King by Jonathan Eig (signed bookplate)*** – worth £25

UK DIRECT DEBIT

☐ UK Direct Debit – pay just £22.50 every 6 issues by Direct Debit – **SAVING 32%** plus your choice of book *(please complete order form below)*

YOUR DETAILS (ESSENTIAL)

Title Forename Surname

Address

Postcode

Home tel no Mobile tel no

Email

☐ **I wish to purchase a gift subscription** (please supply gift recipient's name and address on a separate sheet)

KEEP IN TOUCH

BBC History Revealed (published by Immediate Media Company Limited) would like to send you updates, special offers and promotions by email. You can unsubscribe at any time.
Please tick here if you would like to receive these ☐

We would also like to keep in touch by post and telephone about other relevant offers and promotions from Immediate Media. If you do not wish to be contacted this way, please tick here: post ☐ phone ☐. For more information about how to change the way we contact you and how we hold your personal information, please see our privacy policy, which can be viewed online at *immediate.co.uk/privacy-policy*

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

DIRECT Debit

To: the Manager (Bank/Building Society)

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch sort code

Reference number (internal use only)

Originator's identification number

7 1 0 6 4 4

Please pay Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature Date / /

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit mandates from some types of account

OTHER PAYMENT OPTIONS

☐ **UK by credit/debit card or cheque** for just £49.99 for 13 issues **(SAVING 30%)** plus your choice of book
☐ **Europe inc Eire** €68 for 13 issues ☐ **USA** $65.00 for 13 issues ☐ **Rest of World** $70.00 for 13 issues

CREDIT CARD DETAILS Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Issue no ☐☐ Valid from ☐☐☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐☐☐

Signature Date

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Immediate Media Co for £ _____

OVERSEAS Please complete the order form and send to:
BBC History Revealed magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, NORTHAMPTON, NN4 7BF, UK

*Choice of book is only available to UK residents. Stock is subject to availability. *BBC History Revealed* magazine reserves the right to send an alternative book. Please allow 28 days after payment has been taken for delivery of your book. **At the time of writing, *Anne Boleyn & Elizabeth I* is due to be published on 18/05/2023. *Henry III: Reform, Rebellion, Civil War, Settlement, 1259–1272* is due to be published on 23/05/2023. *King: The Life of Martin Luther King* is due to be published on 16/05/2023. These books will be delivered with any subscription orders within 28 days of this date. Direct Debit offer is available for UK customers only. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. ***Your HistoryExtra.com access will continue to be free as part of your magazine subscription and will come to an end if you decide to cancel your print subscription at any time. **Offer ends 6 July 2023.**

7 VIETNAM WAR FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW
AN A-Z OF CORONATIONS
BBC HISTORY REVEALED
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
BRITISH CASTLES
Explore the buildings that shaped a nation – from Pembroke to Portcheste
PLUS How long were Roman togas? Who really
WHAT IF BRITAIN HADN'T CRACKED THE ENIGMA CODE?
100 YEARS OF WEMBLEY
BBC HISTORY REVEALED
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
THE NAPOLEONIC WARS
Explore the 19th-century fight for European supremacy
HURRY!
Offer ends
6 July
2023

YOUR PERFECT SUMMER COMPANION

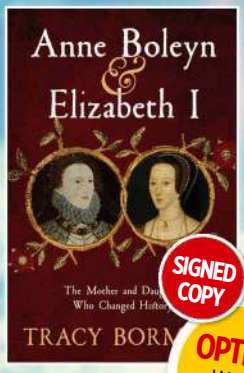
- Your choice of **book* worth up to £30**
- **Subscribe for only £22.50** every 6 issues by Direct Debit, saving 32% on the shop price*
- **Free UK delivery** direct to your door
- Join thousands of subscribers with **FREE access to HistoryExtra.com** worth £34.99 – including the ad-free HistoryExtra podcast and EXCLUSIVE subscriber app***

SUMMER BOOKS OFFER

SAVE 32%

AND GET YOUR SUMMER BOOK WORTH UP TO £30*

when you subscribe to BBC HISTORY REVEALED this summer



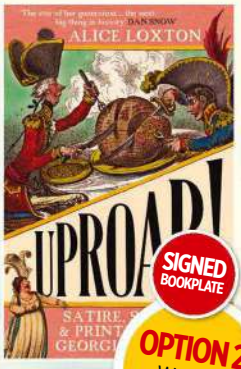
SIGNED COPY

OPTION 1 WORTH £25

Anne Boleyn & Elizabeth I

By Tracy Borman

Piecing together evidence from original documents and artefacts, this fascinating and insightful book tells the story of Anne Boleyn's relationship with her daughter, the future Elizabeth I. In so doing, it sheds new light on two of the most influential women in history.



SIGNED BOOKPLATE

OPTION 2 WORTH £25

UPROAR!

By Alice Loxton

Alice Loxton reveals how caricaturists such as James Gillray profoundly altered British humour, setting the stage for everything from Gilbert and Sullivan to *Private Eye*. This is a book that will cause readers to reappraise everything they think they know about genteel Georgian London, and see it for what it was – a time of UPROAR!

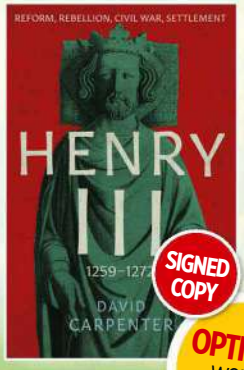
SIGNED COPY

OPTION 3 WORTH £25

The Windsors at War: The Nazi Threat to the Crown

By Alexander Larman

Alexander Larman's new book tells the story of the seismic decade between 1937 and 1947, when family rifts and personal tragedies threatened to tear Britain's monarchy apart – just as the nation was facing its darkest hour.



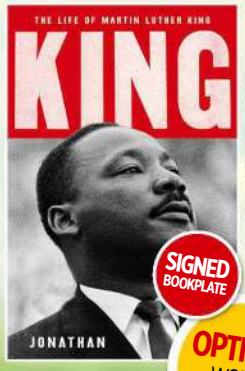
SIGNED COPY

OPTION 4 WORTH £30

Henry III: Reform, Rebellion, Civil War, Settlement, 1259–1272

By David Carpenter

This groundbreaking biography illuminates as never before the political twists and turns of Henry III's later years, showing how politics and religion were intimately connected.



SIGNED BOOKPLATE

OPTION 5 WORTH £25

King: The Life of Martin Luther King

By Jonathan Eig

Vividly written and exhaustively researched, Jonathan Eig's new book is the first major biography of Martin Luther King Jr in several decades – and the first to include recently declassified FBI files yielding a host of intriguing revelations.

Easy ways to order

www.buysubscriptions.com/HRP122

03330 162 115† **Quote code HRP122**

Scan the QR code with your phone

SCAN ME

†UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed-line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages, call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open 9am–5pm weekdays. Overseas readers call +44 1604 973 723

6 THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HAY FEVER

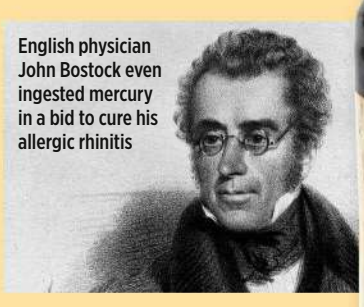
As pollen levels begin to rise, we ask: why is it called hay fever? How did people in the past treat the condition? And why was it originally known as a disease of the upper classes?

1 TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, NO ONE HAD HEARD OF HAY FEVER...

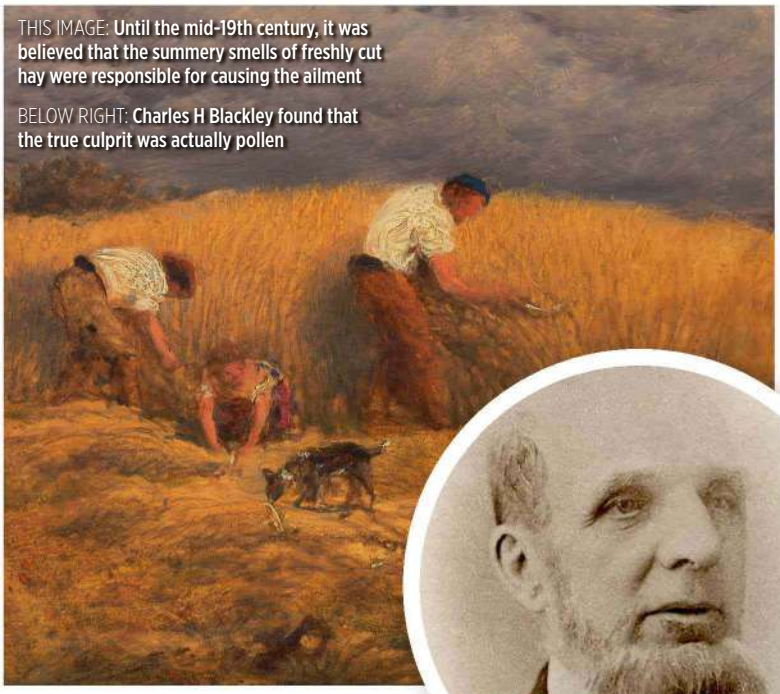
That is not to say that people didn't suffer from the condition – it just wasn't medically recognised yet.

The English physician John Bostock (1772–1846) was the first person to accurately describe the malady. In 1819, he presented a study called *Case of a Periodical Affection of the Eyes and Chest* to a group of physicians and surgeons at the Medical and Chirurgical Society of London. In his talk, he described a patient with a "rather delicate" constitution who suffered from sneezing and itching during the summer months. Bostock referred to the patient using the initials "JB", but the person he was describing was himself.

Bostock, who was 46 at the time, had been suffering from allergic rhinitis – hay fever – since the age of eight. He had tried a number of home remedies over the years, including opium; purging; "topical bleeding" and – rather horrifyingly – "courses of mercury". None of these 'cures' had any "distinct or permanent benefit," but Bostock did discover that confining himself to his house for six weeks eased his symptoms.

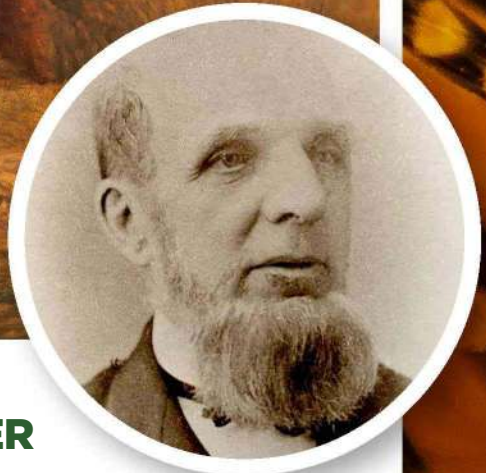


English physician John Bostock even ingested mercury in a bid to cure his allergic rhinitis



THIS IMAGE: **Until the mid-19th century, it was believed that the summery smells of freshly cut hay were responsible for causing the ailment**

BELOW RIGHT: **Charles H Blackley found that the true culprit was actually pollen**



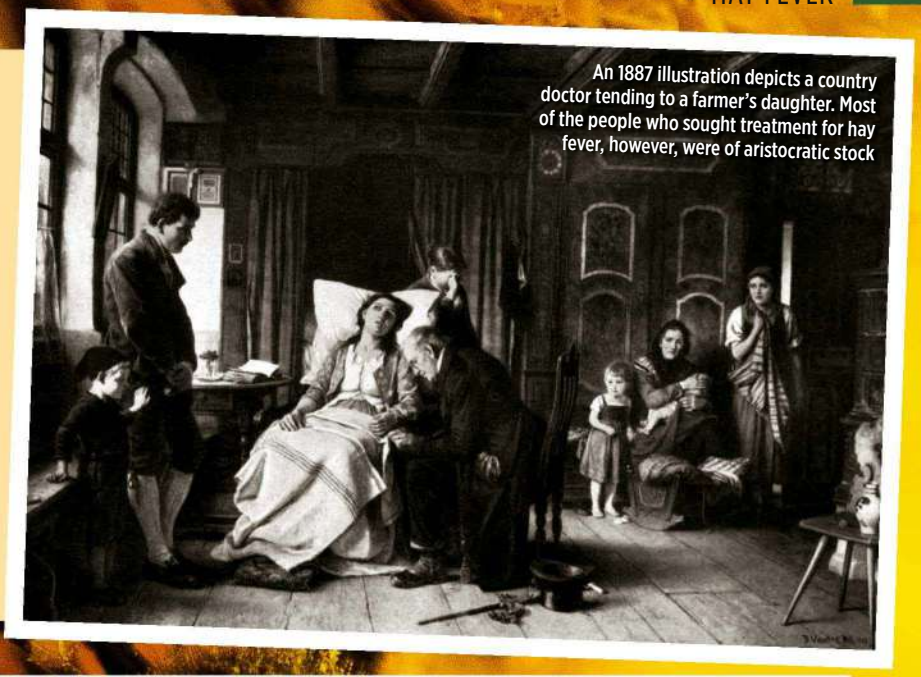
2 'HAY FEVER' IS A MISNOMER

Although John Bostock was the first to write about hay fever, he wasn't responsible for its name. In fact, the term "hay fever" takes its name from a popular idea in the 19th century that the smell of hay in the summer irritated the body. Bostock wrote about this idea in 1828, although he never really believed it to be true; instead, he referred to the affliction as "catarrhus aestivus" or "summer catarrh" (catarrh, here, meaning an inflammation of mucus). The main hay fever culprit – pollen – wasn't identified until more than 40 years later, by the Manchester physician Charles H Blackley. For whatever reason though, the term "pollen fever" never caught on.

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X1, WELLCOME COLLECTION X1, PUBLIC DOMAIN X1

3 IN THE 19TH CENTURY, HAY FEVER WAS COMMONLY REGARDED AS AN 'ARISTOCRATIC DISEASE'

By the 1860s, "hay fever" and "hay asthma" had become widely accepted terms in the medical community. The condition was, however, almost exclusively associated with the elite. In 1873, Charles H Blackley observed in his paper *Experimental Researches on the Nature and Causes of Catarrhus Aestivus* that most of his patients suffering from hay fever tended to be either doctors or members of the clergy. It was an "aristocratic disease", he said, that was "almost wholly confined to the upper classes of society".



An 1887 illustration depicts a country doctor tending to a farmer's daughter. Most of the people who sought treatment for hay fever, however, were of aristocratic stock

ABOVE: **One 'expert' blamed hay fever on social changes, such as the education of women**

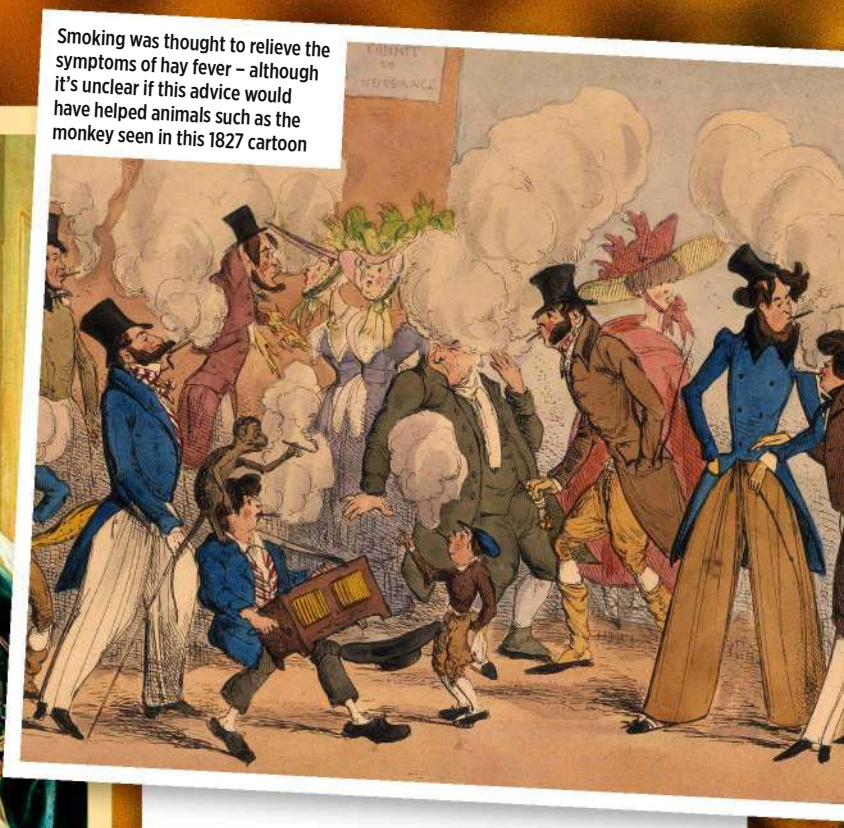
RIGHT: **Industrialisation was also deemed responsible for causing a sharp spike in the number of sufferers**

4 PEOPLE OF 'ANGLO-SAXON' ORIGIN WERE BELIEVED TO BE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO HAY FEVER – ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE MEN

Blackley's observations were backed up in 1887 during a lecture delivered to the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society by Scottish physician Andrew Clark. Hay fever, Clark suggested, was linked to the nervous system and affected "the man before the woman, the educated before the ignorant, the gentle before the rude, the courtier before the clown…" Hay fever thrived in cooler climates, he thought, seeking the city over the countryside and targeting individuals of "Anglo-Saxon" and "English-speaking" origin.

In 1881, the American medical author George Beard concluded that hay fever was the result of the stresses of modern life: "[It] is the cry of the system struggling with its environment," he argued, and rising reports of the condition could be attributed to factors including, namely, the increased education of women, climate change and industrialisation.

Hanoverian monarch William IV is reported to have suffered from an "attack" of hay fever that lasted for several weeks



Smoking was thought to relieve the symptoms of hay fever – although it's unclear if this advice would have helped animals such as the monkey seen in this 1827 cartoon

5 HAY FEVER WAS ONCE FASHIONABLE IN THE UNITED STATES, AND SUFFERERS WERE KNOWN AS 'HAYFEVERITES'

Given its perceived links with the upper class, is it any wonder that hay fever almost became a 'badge of honour' towards the end of the 19th century? In the US, sufferers were called "hayfeverites" and the illness was considered a fashionable – even desirable – affliction among elite circles. In his 2007 book *Allergy: The History of the Modern Malady*, Mark Jackson relates how growing reports of hay fever in the 19th century prompted the creation of a number of societies relating to the condition. One of the most notable was the United States Hay Fever Association; founded in 1874 and located in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the health retreat functioned as a sort of hay fever holiday resort, offering middle-class professionals a peaceful refuge from the irksome summer pollen. One 'hay fever expert' at the time, a man named Morrill Wyman, reported taking numerous 'hay fever holidays' in the White Mountains during his childhood.

But hay fever hadn't always been considered fashionable. In 1827, *The Times* reported that the Duke of Devonshire was suffering from "what is vulgarly called the Hay-Fever". Ten years later, their scorn for the condition had lessened. King William IV was said to have "been subject to an attack of hay fever from which he has generally suffered for several weeks". The king, it appears, could not possibly be suffering from a "vulgar" condition. William died shortly after the publication of the newspaper report, although whether his "hay fever" had anything to do with his death is uncertain.

The White Mountains of New Hampshire were said to be a haven for hay fever sufferers

6 TOBACCO SMOKING WAS BELIEVED TO HELP RELIEVE THE WORST SYMPTOMS OF HAY FEVER

An article from the *Petersburg Times*, published on 11 September 1896, reveals that contemporary doctors recommended a number of ways to treat hay fever. Visiting the seaside, taking a trip on a yacht or burying oneself in a "densely populated town" were among the softer suggestions, but the method considered to be the most effective was decidedly more questionable: "One of the best remedies [for hay fever] is tobacco, the smoke being retained in the mouth as long as possible, and ejected through the nose," advised the journalist.

For 19th-century hay fever sufferers who didn't fancy this particular method (women, in particular, were advised against it), inhaling ammonium chloride was a recommended alternative – but this was not without its risks. "You should exercise caution when using ammonium chloride," continued the *Petersburg Times* journalist, "[as it leads] to the vice of chloroform inhalation, which sometimes proves fatal."

WORDS: RACHEL DINNING

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

Learn more about maladies and remedies of the past with our archive of podcast episodes about the history of medicine: *historyextra.com/medicine-episodes*

GETTY IMAGES X4

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

Visit the battlefields of World War I, where soldiers confronted the stark reality of modern industrial warfare

PODCAST

Peter Hart answers listeners' questions about life in the trenches on a recent episode of the *HistoryExtra* podcast: *historyextra.com/trench-life-qa*

28 Everything you wanted to know about life in the trenches
Peter Hart answers key questions about trench warfare – and dispels a few myths along the way

32 A dismal existence
Discover how soldiers learned to cope with disease, boredom and the overhanging threat of death

36 Shrapnel, shell-shock and shattered defences
Learn about the conflict's tactics and weaponry

39 Hell on earth
Uncover the real story behind the battle of the Somme and its complicated legacy today

42 Trench life through a lens
We showcase some of the most evocative photographs of everyday life in the trenches

46 Sisters in arms
Meet the brave women who joined the war effort and risked their lives to tend to the wounded

48 Opinion
Peter Hart shares his views on the evolution of trench warfare during World War I, and why certain clichés have prevailed

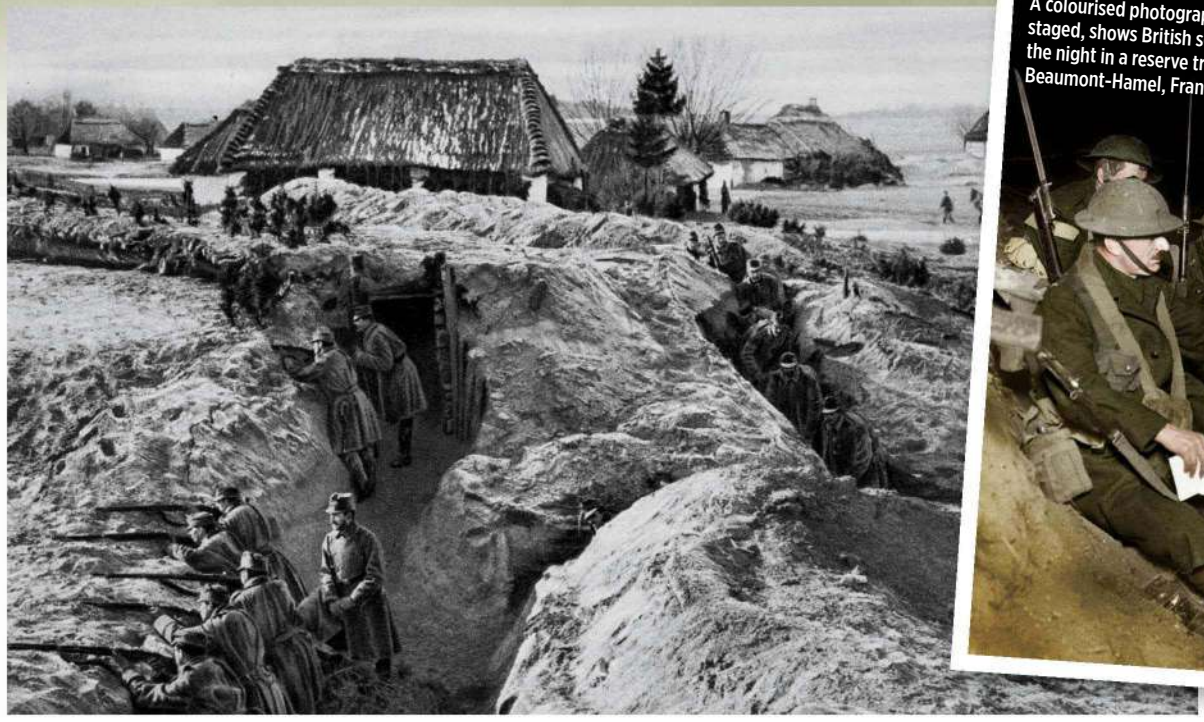
49 Get hooked
Take your knowledge further with our pick of the best books, podcasts and TV programmes to explore next

HISTORICAL CONSULTANTS FOR THIS MONTH'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE

TAFF GILLINGHAM is a military historian specialising in the life of the British and Commonwealth Soldier, 1890–1960. Since 1998 he has also been one of the top military historical advisors for film, television and theatre.

PETER HART is the former oral historian at the Imperial War Museum, London, and co-author of *Laugh or Cry: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Pen & Sword Military, 2022).

GETTY IMAGES X7, ALAMY X2



A colourised photograph, possibly staged, shows British soldiers spending the night in a reserve trench near Beaumont-Hamel, France

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

Peter Hart answers questions about the experiences of the men who served in some of the harshest conditions of World War I

Q: What exactly is a trench?

A: Trenches are defensive structures that have been used in conflicts right up to the present day, but they are perhaps most commonly associated with combat during World War I.

In its simplest form, the classic British trench used during the 1914–18 war was about six feet deep and three-and-a-half feet wide. It had a fire step, which was about 18 x 18 inches, where soldiers could stand and shoot at the enemy. In front of the trench there was a parapet, which was about three feet tall and six feet deep, to protect soldiers from bullets. Behind the trench, there was a similar structure called a parados.

Trenches could also have an A-frame, with wood and chicken wire riveting to prevent collapse. However, it's important to note that trenches varied in design and structure depending on the location and circumstances. Some were just ditches, while others were concreted. But their main purpose was to provide a safe place for soldiers to defend themselves against the enemy.

ABOVE LEFT: **Austro-Hungarian troops take up their positions in trenches near Jasionna, Poland. Fighting on the Eastern Front was just as brutal as it was on the Western Front**

LEFT: **A staged image showing a trench in France, c1918. The two men on the right are perched next to the entrance to a dugout, cut into the trench wall**

Q: How far did they stretch?

A: The trenches stretched from the North Sea all the way down to Switzerland, covering a distance of about 475 miles. However, this was just the front line; there were also communication trenches, support lines, and lines that stretched back from the front line. So, that's an approximate distance of 1,500 miles.

But that's not all. There were many other trenches – sometimes multiple systems of trenches – stretching many thousands of miles. It's quite a

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1

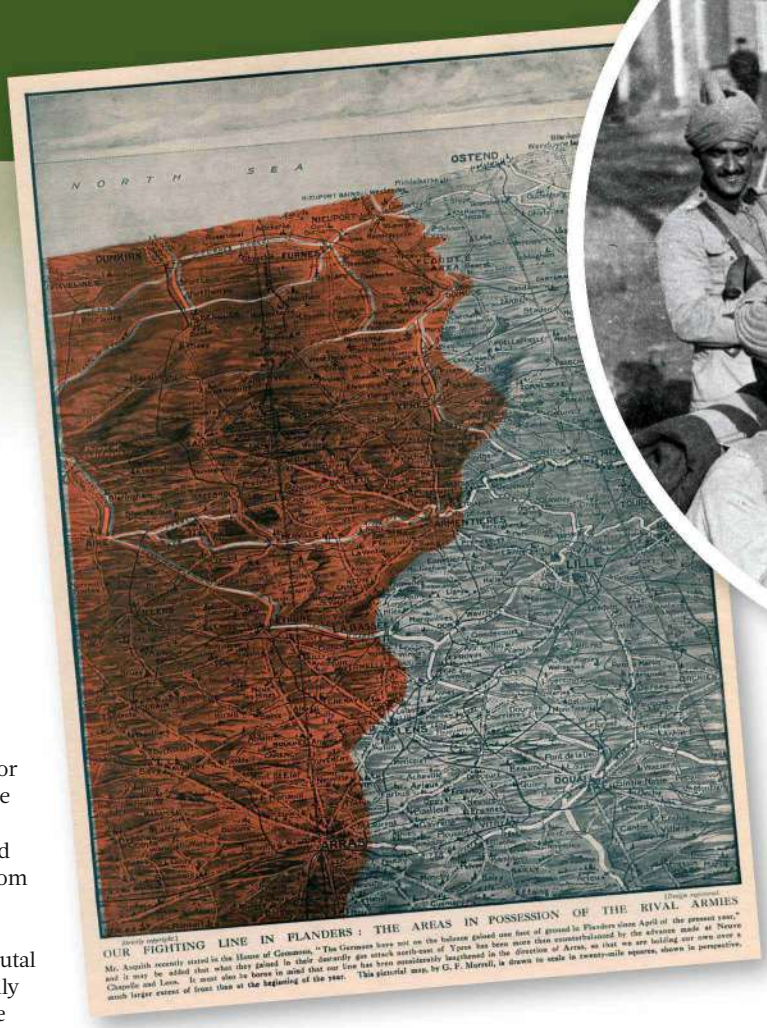
remarkable feat when you think about it, but also important to remember that it was the soldiers who had to dig them, which was a very difficult task.

Q: How was trench warfare on the Eastern Front different to that on the Western Front?

A: The two were similar in many ways, but there were some key differences. To start with, the Eastern Front covered a much larger area, with the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian armies fighting each other for three or four years. The trenches of the Eastern Front stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea and covered a distance ranging from 800 miles to 1,500 miles.

The fighting on the Eastern Front, however, was just as brutal and the casualties were actually often higher there than on the Western Front. The trenches themselves were similar, but their sophistication depended on the terrain on which they were built. For instance, breastworks [hastily constructed fortifications built to breast height] were often located in marshy areas.

Another thing to note is that the Eastern Front was much colder during winter than the Western Front. Siberian winds would rush across the area, making life even more difficult for soldiers. Overall, it's important that we remember the Eastern Front and not just focus on the Western Front; life there was just as bad.



ABOVE: **A British map shows the state of play in Flanders by autumn 1915; the sections shaded red and blue denote the respective areas held by the Allies and Central Powers**

BELOW: **Anzac soldiers repair a divisional car in Bonnières, France, August 1918. Thousands of troops from Australia and New Zealand enlisted to fight in WWI**

Q: Who was stationed in the trenches?

A: Everyone who was in the army – other than women – and in a fighting unit was stationed in the trenches at some point. The British had a system where battalions were rotated constantly, so soldiers would spend a maximum of two or three days on the front line before going back to the support or reserve lines, and then on to rest. This preserved morale and gave soldiers something to look forward to. The Germans and French did not have such an organised system, so soldiers often spent longer on the front line. And of course, behind the fighting battalions were other essential groups such as Britain's Army Service Corps, who provided food and supplies, artillery, and people working in the camps and railways.

Over a million Indian soldiers served in WWI; two corps numbering 30,000–50,000 men arrived on the Western Front in October 1914 alone

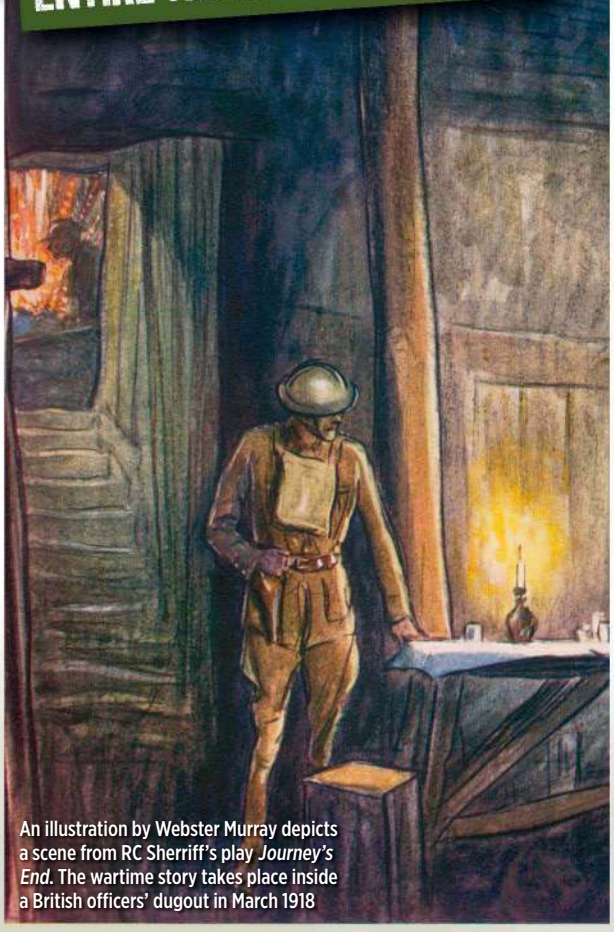
Q: What role did empire troops play on the front line?

A: The role of the empire troops during World War I was a crucial one. The Indian Army, which included soldiers from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, made the biggest contribution in terms of ▶

Workers at a British factory fill canisters full of tea, ready to be shipped out to troops serving across the Channel

A French postcard, presumably intended for soldiers fighting at the front, depicts a woman sending her lover a flower and her "sweetest kiss"

"ON AVERAGE, SOLDIERS WOULD ONLY ATTACK OR BE ATTACKED A COUPLE OF TIMES DURING THEIR ENTIRE TRENCH EXPERIENCE"



An illustration by Webster Murray depicts a scene from RC Sherriff's play *Journey's End*. The wartime story takes place inside a British officers' dugout in March 1918

numbers. Many Indian soldiers served on the Western Front, with two corps – some 30,000– 50,000 men – arriving in October 1914, just in time to aid the British Army. They proved to be good fighting men and really saved the day. Their contribution was immense, and many of the soldiers were later sent away to serve in Palestine and Mesopotamia, where they formed the backbone of the force. Both of those campaigns were ultimately successful.

Aside from the Indian Army, soldiers from other countries in the empire also made significant contributions. The Australians and New Zealanders, commonly known as the Anzacs, were regarded as elite formations by themselves and others. Although they took some time to learn the ropes, by 1917 and 1918 the Anzacs had become a formidable group of fighting men and were actually reserved by Field Marshal Haig as an elite force. The Canadian troops were also brilliant.

So, all together, the empire troops – along with soldiers from many other countries that I haven't mentioned – made incredibly important contributions on the Western Front.

Q: How much time did soldiers in the trenches spend in actual combat?

A: When it comes to the amount of time soldiers spent in actual combat during World War I, there is an interesting perspective provided by the historian Gordon Corrigan, who pointed out that the British Army spent more time playing football than it did going over the top. Of course, this is because a football match takes an hour and a half, whereas going over the top doesn't take very long at all.

However, Corrigan's point is a serious one – on average, soldiers would only attack or be attacked a couple of times during their entire trench experience. Again, this varied depending on how

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X3

long a soldier was stationed in the trenches, but even during a two or three-day stay it was unlikely that a soldier would engage in actual combat. Instead, most losses were incurred through shellfire or sniping.

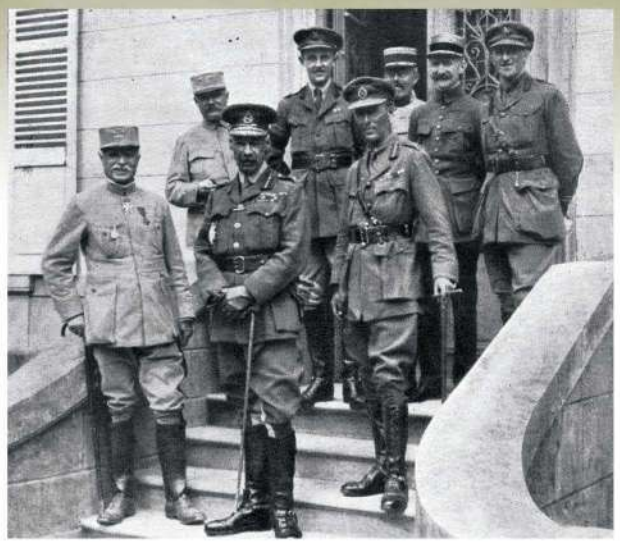
When soldiers *were* attacked, it was an incredibly tense and horrible ordeal. RC Sherriff's play (and later film) *Journey's End* depicts the lead-up to a big German attack in 1918, and it conveys just how awful it was for soldiers who faced this kind of threat. They knew it was coming, and they knew that the Germans would cut them off with shellfire. It was a nightmare experience that left a lasting impact on those who survived it.

Q: How did soldiers on the front spend their free time?

A: Most of the free time that soldiers had was at night, or in between their sergeant coming around and giving them orders. One thing that many soldiers did during in their downtime was drink tea. It became a bit of a fixation, actually; soldiers of the British Army still drink lots of hot, sweet tea to this day.

Crucially, soldiers would also write letters home and read letters from loved ones. This was incredibly important to them, because in those days they never knew if they would hear from their families again, and some soldiers were wonderful authors. They would sit around and talk about what they wished they were eating, like steak and kidney pie, and imagine fantastic meals. They talked about anything and everything to keep their minds off the war.

Another thing soldiers did in their free time was sleep, because they were so tired. Even though they might only be on the front line for two or three days, it was a tiring and stressful experience.



ABOVE: **Allied generals of the Somme offensive, including Émile Fayolle, Henry Rawlinson and John Seely (*front row, left to right*). Contrary to popular belief, the generals of WWI were far from incompetent**

BELOW LEFT: **A famous image shows a trio of British troops tucking into hot rations in the Ancre Valley during the Somme offensive**

Q: What sort of food did the soldiers eat, and how did they cook it?

A: British soldiers were provided with a diet that contained roughly 4,000 calories a day. This was meant to ensure they had enough energy to perform their duties despite the physical and mental demands of the war. However, the food was often tinned and canned, which meant it lacked variety and freshness. They also had dog biscuits, which were highly nutritious but not very tasty, as well as salted bacon, which they could fry and then use the lard for other dishes.

In addition, there was Maconochie, which was a meat and vegetable stew that was quite unpopular among soldiers due to its unpleasant taste, especially if it wasn't warmed through properly. Finally, they had pork and beans – mainly beans, with very little pork – but this was still considered tasty by some soldiers. The soldiers used portable stoves known as Tommy cookers to prepare their meals, but it wasn't the same as cooking – it just warmed the food up a bit.

ABOVE: **A British Army piggery in France. In early 1918, the quartermaster-general to the forces, Sir John Cowans, ordered that such facilities be built in all British camps**

Q: What would you say is the biggest myth about life in the trenches?

A: There is a common perception that the British generals during World War I were incompetent and spent their time in châteaux far away from the front lines. However, this is simply not true. Yes, generals were often stationed in châteaux, but they served as communication centres from which they could effectively command their troops. It's important to remember that four lieutenant generals (each commanding of a corp of around 60,000 men), 12 major generals (each commanding a division of 12,000 to 18,000 men), and 81 brigadier generals, (each commanding 3,000 to 4,000 men) were killed during the conflict, with a further 146 wounded or taken as prisoner of war. So many of those in charge lost their lives as well.

Another myth is that the British generals were old and incompetent buffoons. However, many of them were actually only in their forties or fifties, with some even younger, and had already proven themselves in previous conflicts like the Second Boer War (1899–1902). They had a lifetime of experience behind them, so it's unfair to dismiss them as inept. Life in the trenches was a brutal and deadly experience for all involved, including the officers who led their troops into battle.

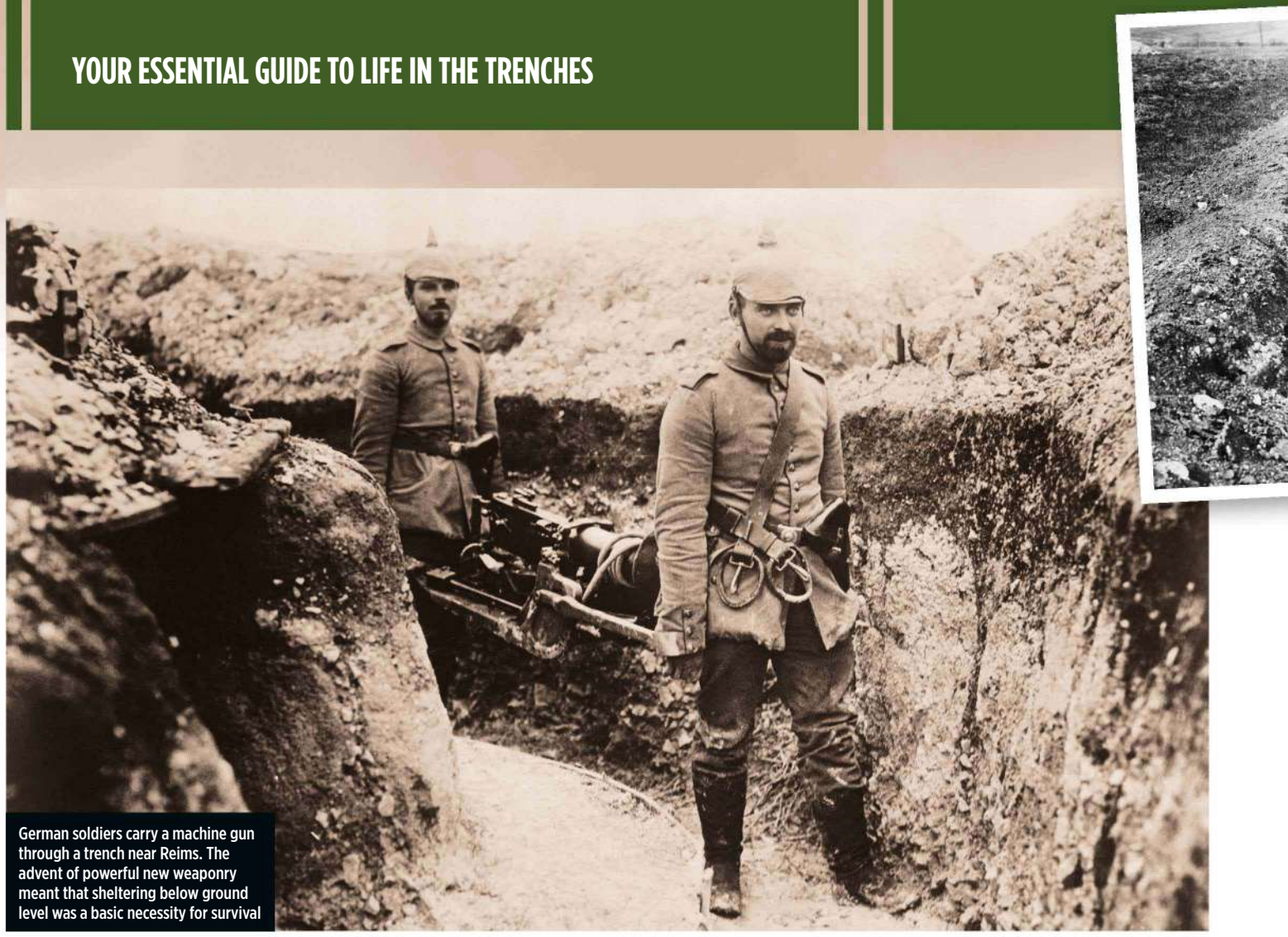
INTERVIEW: EMILY BRIFFETT

PETER HART is the former oral historian at the Imperial War Museum, London. His books include *Laugh or Cry: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Pen & Sword Military, 2022), written with Gary Bain

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

You can hear a longer version of this interview on the *HistoryExtra* podcast. To listen, scan the QR code shown here or visit *historyextra.com/trench-life-qa*



German soldiers carry a machine gun through a trench near Reims. The advent of powerful new weaponry meant that sheltering below ground level was a basic necessity for survival

GETTY IMAGES X5

A DISMAL EXISTENCE

From fear to boredom, life in the trenches left men battling a range of emotions – as well as lice and rodents

"Nearer and nearer creeps this terrible inferno which only ends in death. May it come quick and mercifully." So wrote Sergeant Horace Reginald Stanley in his diary while serving at Ypres in 1915. "Some poor wretch has the side of his skull blown away and it is obvious nothing can be done for him. Oh the horror of it all."

Sergeant Stanley's testimony remains a shocking, uncomfortable read – even from the distance of 108 years. Yet there was nothing particularly extraordinary about it. For countless soldiers – eating, sleeping, fighting and often dying at the edge of no-man's land – such horrors would have been all-too familiar. Trench warfare is surely the defining characteristic of World War I. As anyone who's watched *Blackadder* or *All Quiet on the Western Front* will attest, when we think of the 1914–18 conflict, our minds invariably turn to what soldiers were forced to endure in the trenches.

SELF-PRESERVATION

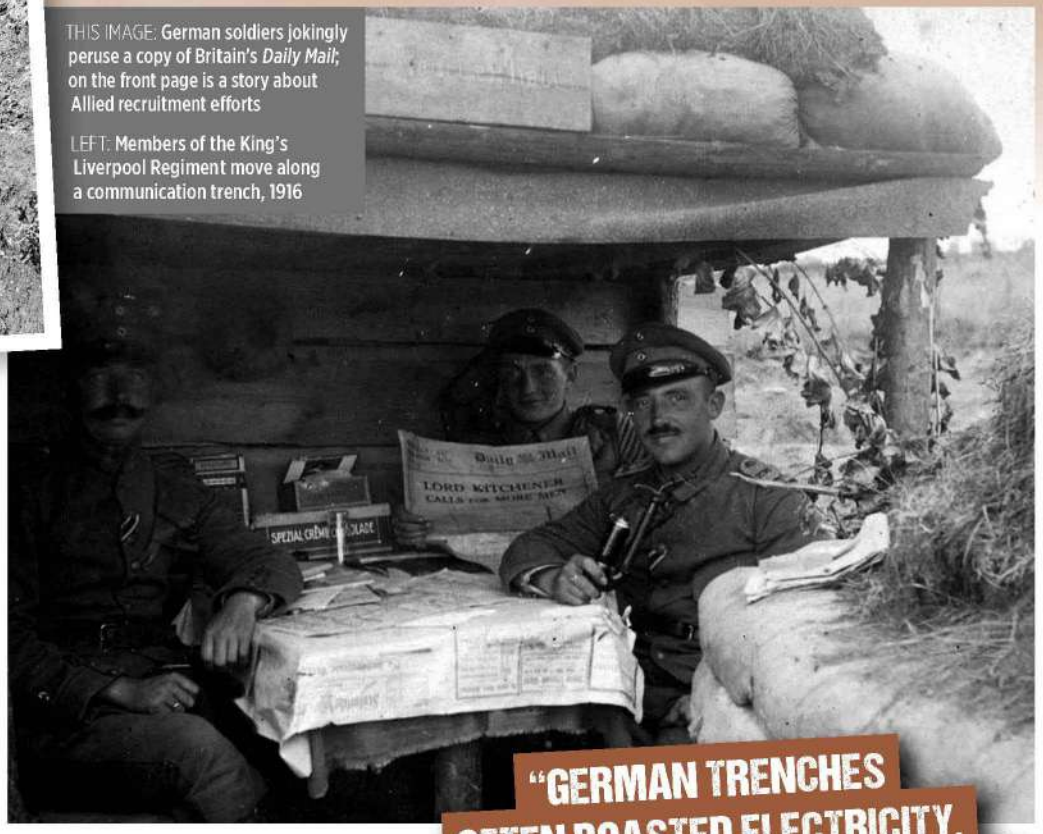
There was nothing new about trench warfare when World War I erupted in 1914. Recent conflicts – the American Civil War and Russo-Japanese War among them – all pointed to trenches becoming the default for armed struggles between large, industrial powers unable to land rapid knock-out blows. With new technologies such as powerful artillery and rapid-fire machine guns enabling defenders to cut down attackers with terrifying efficiency, military planners in 1914 were painfully aware that their armies would probably have to head underground in the interests of self-preservation.

Yet what made World War I different from what had gone before was the sheer scale of the trench system that emerged from the early months of the conflict. By the end of the war, a system of subterranean passages snaked its way from the North Sea coast of Belgium all the way south to Alsace on the Swiss border. And it wasn't confined to the Western Front. From the southern shores of the Baltic to the mountains of northern Italy, from Gallipoli to the Middle East, soldiers got out their spades and dug for shelter. All in all, the trenches built during World War I, laid end to end, would have stretched for 35,000 miles.

In some sectors, front line trenches could be as far as a mile from enemy positions; in others, no-man's land was little longer than a football pitch. But what many British troops wouldn't have known as they peered towards German

THIS IMAGE: German soldiers jokingly peruse a copy of Britain's *Daily Mail*; on the front page is a story about Allied recruitment efforts

LEFT: Members of the King's Liverpool Regiment move along a communication trench, 1916



positions across no-man's land is that they were often staring at superior trenches. For much of the war on the Western Front, the Germans found themselves on the defensive. They had no intention of being shifted from their gains early in the war, and that was often reflected in the quality of their living quarters. German dugouts also tended to be deeper because they nearly always occupied better-drained high ground. As a result, unlike many of their British counterparts, German trenches often boasted electricity, telephone lines and spacious accommodation.

"We got to the Hindenburg Line and you ought to have seen the dugout they had. They were like hotel rooms," wrote Ted Rimmer of the South Lancashire Regiment, recalling his unit's advance on German lines. "They were all fitted out with special pumps... tables and everything... Ours were just simply dugout earth."

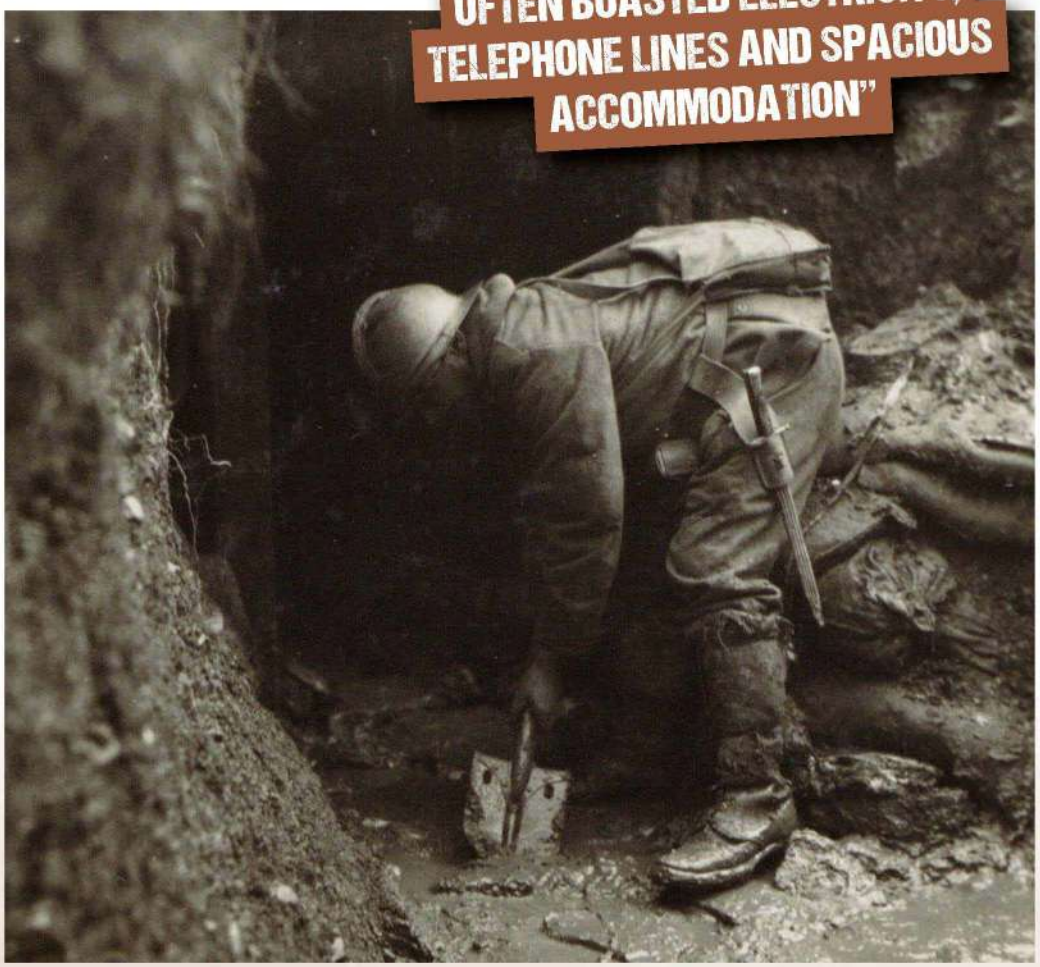
"GERMAN TRENCHES OFTEN BOASTED ELECTRICITY, TELEPHONE LINES AND SPACIOUS ACCOMMODATION"

MIRED IN THE MUD

Yet no matter your nationality, regardless of the sophistication of your trenches, if you served in northern Europe, there was no escaping the mud. As one British infantry soldier put it: "The mud in Belgium varies in consistency from water to about the thickness of dough ready for the oven." And it got everywhere: clothes, hair, eyes, equipment and food.

Another inescapable fact of trench life was rain. Trenches offered limited shelter from the deluges that regularly battered Belgium and northern France. With their living quarters invariably lying in puddles of water, many soldiers ended up with 'trench foot', which usually led to their swollen, saturated extremities becoming infected. One soldier recalled "a session in Ypres where all our feet were massaged with whale oil" in an attempt to keep them on the frontline.

Trench foot certainly proved a headache for the authorities in the opening year of the war, but it was a problem to which they found solutions. The construction of better-built ▶



Trench warfare wasn't purely confined to the Western Front; here, a soldier attempts to shovel mud out of a trench in northern Italy

British troops are inspected for trench foot, 1918. Keeping one's feet clean and dry was of utmost importance when stuck in the mud for days on end

trenches with superior drainage – and the practice of punishing officers who allowed their men to succumb to the condition – meant that numbers were falling by the end of 1915 and, by 1917, cases were negligible.

Keeping thousands of soldiers fed and watered in trench systems that stretched for hundreds of miles on multiple fronts was a mighty undertaking. Cooks aimed to serve up hot meals every day – rations were designed to provide specific numbers of calories to keep men fit and healthy – and cookery manuals of the time featured a wide range of recipes. However, these often featured very similar ingredients: corned beef stew, corned beef hash, corned beef fritters and corned beef curry. In short, the food was usually good, but dull.

If supplying tens of thousands of men with sufficient food was an enormous logistical task, so too was the challenge of providing adequate sanitation. During the first year of the conflict, many soldiers simply went to the toilet in buckets or used shell holes. However, by mid-1915, latrines had become a standard fixture across the British trench system and so-called sanitary orderlies had been appointed to empty them and prevent the spread of disease.

In those early months of the war, if you got on the wrong side of the sergeant, you might be given the job of digging out a hole and emptying the buckets at night. Some soldiers lit a cigarette to mask the stench as they performed this unenviable task, a foolhardy move when enemy snipers were constantly scanning the horizon for someone to take a shot at.

"DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THE CONFLICT, MANY SOLDIERS SIMPLY WENT TO THE TOILET IN BUCKETS OR USED SHELL HOLES"

Emptying buckets was far from the only task carried out under the cover of darkness. In fact, nearly all work was performed at night. Heading out into no-man's land to repair barbed wire, building new trenches and launching small-scale raids on enemy trenches – these were all tasks that were simply too perilous to conduct in daylight.

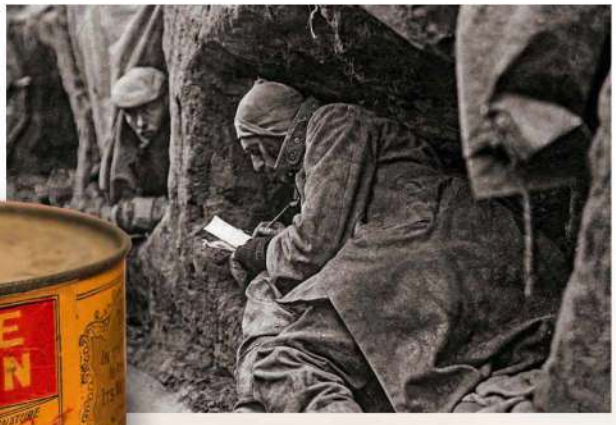
BATTLING BOREDOM

As for the days themselves, they often followed a regimented routine. In the mornings the trenches were a hive of activity, with soldiers tasked with cleaning equipment and repairing their living quarters. The afternoons provided the opportunity for a little downtime, when troops could grab some sleep (from mid-1915, men were *only* allowed to sleep during the day, usually from midday until 4pm), play cards and read letters from home.

"The average day in the ordinary bit of the trenches was just by the way doing nothing!" recalled James Pratt, who served with the Gordon Highlanders "… there had to be always somebody on sentry go all the time… Apart from that, trench life was extremely dull."

It may have been dull, but boredom was among the most benign of the emotions experienced by soldiers in the trenches. Homesickness, hunger, gnawing fear, the trauma of witnessing the dead and dying at close quarters… all had a potentially shattering psychological impact on those who occupied the trenches.

Playing card games was a simple way of staving off the boredom that very often came with trench life



ABOVE: **Letter-writing gave soldiers an opportunity to articulate their feelings – and help keep homesickness at bay**

LEFT: **Maconochie ration tins were a familiar sight to British troops**

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X1

LEFT: A soldier – possibly British – receives a close shave from a Serbian comrade

BELOW: Troops ate their meals from mess tins; the top half was for drinking from, the bottom half was for eating from

Rodents were a constant problem. In this c1916 photo, a soldier poses with the rats he has 'hunted' in his trench

"We lived there like beasts," remembered the French soldier G Fenetrier. "It was impossible to be seated. I remember once I was obliged to sit on the corpses of French soldiers to eat my lunch." How could soldiers possibly endure prolonged exposure to experiences such as this?

The answer is: they couldn't. And in recognition of this fact, the armies rotated soldiers in and out of the front line, to offer them some sort of respite. This was a four-part cycle: after a period in the face of the enemy, soldiers moved back and spent a similar amount of time in the support line and then the reserve line, before being moved into 'rest' away from the trenches.

Another tactic that the British deployed to keep up morale was to regularly move units to different parts of the front. They firmly believed that changing soldiers' surroundings was an effective tonic for their spirits.

In truth, the average British soldier spent far longer engaged in training behind the lines than facing the enemy in the trenches. Yet, for all that, the trench network was where the vast majority experienced the conflict. The random shell, the sniper's bullet, sleep deprivation, pervasive mud... for four long years, all became an inescapable fact of life.

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

PESTS AND PESTILENCE

Enemy soldiers weren't the only foe that troops encountered in the trenches – they had to battle vermin and disease, too

Picking lice out of clothing became a regular ritual for troops on all sides

LICE

"The lice were the size of grains of rice, each with its own bite, each with its own itch," so recalled Harry Patch, 'the last fighting Tommy'. As Patch's testimony reveals, lice were among the trench's greatest irritants, leaving blotchy red marks all over the body and giving off a stale smell. And they were everywhere, often setting up home in soldiers' uniforms. Burning them with a naked flame was the most widely employed tactic for removing them. So concerned were the armies at their potential impact on soldiers' health and morale, that they introduced delousing machines.

RATS

"In the night we have heaps of company, rats & mice & the other livestock," wrote Lieutenant Alfred Forbes Johnson of the Royal Garrison Artillery in a letter to his wife, Essie. "Every time you wake [the rats] are fighting and squeeking all over you."

Aside from the massed ranks of the opposing armies, rats were perhaps the average soldier's greatest enemy. They spread diseases and generally made men's lives a misery. And they were incredibly bold. One soldier even recalled how they would attempt to steal food from sleeping soldiers' pockets.

DYSENTERY

Dysentery, a disease that causes the inflammation of the lining of the large intestine, was a problem for thousands of soldiers during World War I, but mostly those serving in places like Gallipoli and Mesopotamia. Exacerbated by the intense heat, rotting corpses and huge numbers of flies, it was nigh on impossible to a get a grip on the disease. Mercifully, it was rarely a problem on the Western Front, where incredibly strict protocols regarding soldiers' cleanliness and hygiene paid dividends.

British infantry shelter in trenches during the second battle of Ypres, 1915. The battle saw the first major deployment of poison gas

A staged photograph from c1918 depicts Allied soldiers attacking what appears to be a damaged concrete bunker

SHRAPNEL, SHELL-SHOCK AND SHATTERED DEFENCES

Trench warfare forced military strategists to develop fresh tactics – and terrifying new weaponry – in a bid to gain the upper hand

When Private Alex Thompson arrived at Ypres in May 1915, he found himself in the middle of a battle for survival. He was thrust straight into a counterattack against the Germans: the two sides were fighting to secure control of a small hill, known only as "Hill 60".

At 10pm, he left the relative safety of his trench and charged over the top, rifle in hand. Thompson recalled: "We advanced maybe five or 10 yards, [but] some of them never got that length – they were killed going over the trench. That was your training, you see, to just keep going, making for the German trenches."

It was a bloodbath. Thompson recounted: "It was like pie meat for the Germans, near everyone was getting [trapped] in the barbed wire… They were just cutting us like cutting hay. The fire was rapid, continuous, machine-gun fire and shrapnel bursting. You wonder who's going to be shot next – and I was shot next."

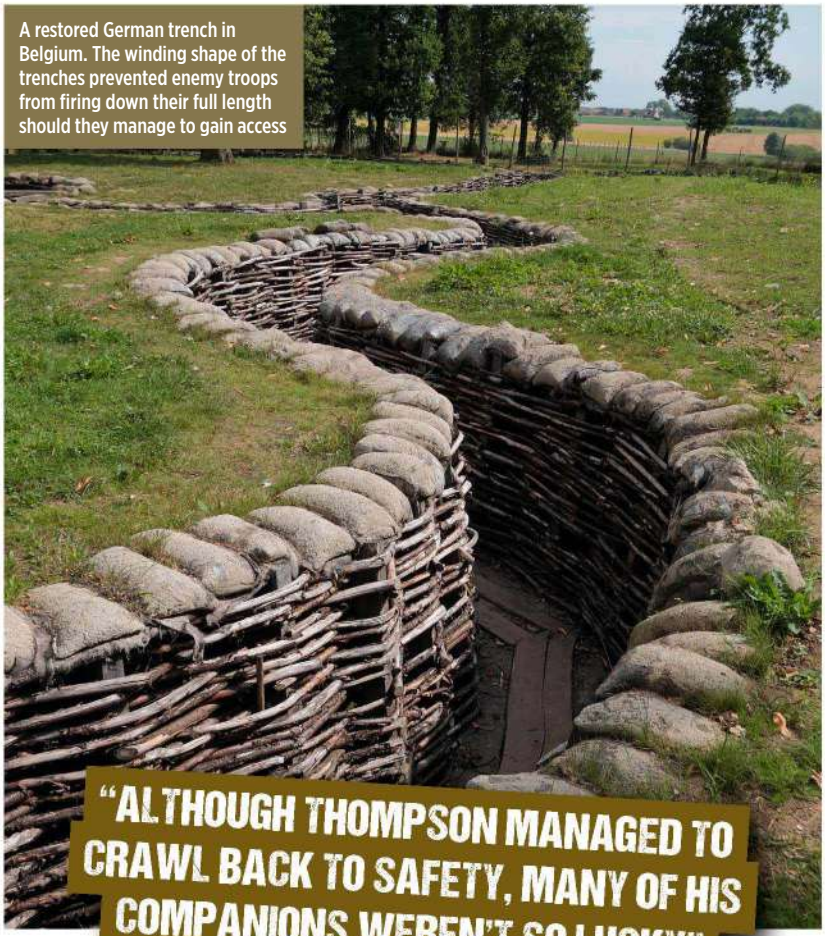
Although Thompson managed to crawl back into the trench and reach safety, many of his companions weren't so lucky. For the next two years, the Allies failed to gain control of that one, small hill.

Millions of men perished in trench warfare, but it was one of the defining strategies of World War I – particularly on the Western Front. However, this strategy was nothing new: armies had been holing down in the earth for centuries, to avoid having soldiers exposed.

British casualties on the Ypres Salient. Approximately one-third of all casualties on the Western Front were killed or wounded in the trenches

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1

Another posed picture shows German soldiers surrendering during the battle of Arras, 1917



A restored German trench in Belgium. The winding shape of the trenches prevented enemy troops from firing down their full length should they manage to gain access

"ALTHOUGH THOMPSON MANAGED TO CRAWL BACK TO SAFETY, MANY OF HIS COMPANIONS WEREN'T SO LUCKY"

But World War I saw the strategy explode. There were several reasons for this: before the war had broken out, military technology had vastly improved: the machine gun had been unveiled in 1884, and artillery had been consistently upgraded since the late 19th century. As well as facing deadly weapons, in 1914 more soldiers were on the battlefield than ever before – meaning more men needed protection.

To avoid being massacred where they stood, in September 1914, both sides began to dig trenches that they could hunker down in and defend, and subterranean corridors soon stretched from northern France all the way to the Swiss Alps.

Although we typically have visions of trench warfare where each side unleashed a storm of heavy artillery on the enemy before sending wave after wave of men charging through no-man's land – a hellish stretch of territory between the two trenches, tangled in barbed wire and pockmarked by craters – this is often an overgeneralisation.

For a start, in many instances no-man's land was typically abandoned farmland, with hardly anything in it – including shell holes, at least in the early days of the war. At the beginning of the conflict, both sides were comparatively light on artillery, and simply couldn't enact the kind of damage that we associate with trench warfare today.

However, as the war ground on, trenches grew into mighty military installations designed with defence in mind. Often working under the cover of darkness, soldiers would dig several ▶

ENTERING ENEMY TERRITORY

Both sides embarked on daring trench raids – with varying degrees of success

As well as unleashing full-frontal assaults on enemy trenches, both the Allies and Central Powers conducted raids into enemy territory to try and gain crucial pieces of information – ideally by returning with a live prisoner or two.

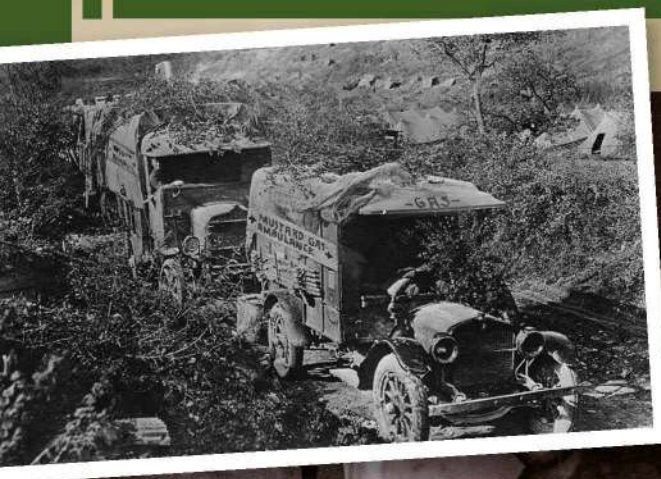
The form these raids took varied from mission to mission. Some were small-scale affairs, carried out under the cover of darkness to avoid detection. In these cases, troops usually equipped themselves with silent weapons, such as knives or trench clubs – these were often crafted from the handles of the spades used to dig the trenches, and modified with fearsome spikes or heavy metal heads.

Most men left their rifles behind on such missions, so that an accidental shot didn't give the game away. In fact, the only firearms that were taken on these raids were often the officers' own firearms, or a small stash of grenades known as Mills bombs (again carried by officers).

At the other end of the scale were trench raids that were so large they needed an entire company to carry them out. These often took place during the day, and soldiers would unleash a box barrage (a wave of artillery fire targeted around a particular area) so that the enemy soldiers were isolated in part of their trench and cut off from backup.

For these large-scale raids, soldiers were armed with rifles and grenades – but, to help keep them light on their feet, they were allowed to leave much of their equipment back in their home trench.

A c1918 photograph – probably staged – shows British troops preparing to go into no-man's land during a night-time raid at Messines



ALAMY X3

◀ parallel lines of trenches, radiating back from the front line and connected by a network of communications trenches. And they could be truly labyrinthine: some German systems built in 1918 stretched out over 14 miles.

The trenches were protected by machine-gun emplacements sheathed in barbed wire, or housed in concrete shelters called pillboxes. They also offered protection to soldiers during artillery attacks via deep dugouts, where troops could shelter and wait for the shelling to stop.

NOXIOUS GAS COCKTAILS

But conventional weapons weren't the only threat soldiers faced. As the war progressed, armies turned to chemical warfare to try and gas the enemy into submission. The first major deployment of poison gas was in 1915, during the second battle of Ypres, when yellow-green clouds smelling of "pineapple and pepper" floated towards the Allied trenches. This was chlorine gas, released by the Germans, and caused thousands of soldiers to hack and cough – leaving scores with breathing problems.

Within the space of a few months, the Allies and the Central Powers had both added poison gas to their arsenal, commonly pumping noxious gas cocktails into artillery shells. While one of the deadliest was the colourless phosgene gas – being several times more potent than chlorine gas – the 'King of Battle Gases' was mustard gas. If a soldier inhaled it directly, it would attack their lungs and throat as well as their eyes, nose and mouth, potentially leading to blindness or even death. Even if they were wearing a gas mask, mustard gas was still a hazard: it seeped through their uniforms and caused pus-filled blisters to break out all over their bodies.

ABOVE: **A pair of Canadian soldiers sit covered in bandages in the aftermath of a gas attack. Some chemical weapons caused blisters, as well as respiratory damage**

TOP LEFT: **The Allies deployed mustard gas ambulances to help treat troops affected by the attacks**

RIGHT: **A wounded man receives treatment on a stretcher, presumably before being taken away to a casualty clearing station**

With this explosion in weaponry, millions of soldiers were wounded or killed on the battlefield. Stretcher-bearers combed the battlefield after the fighting had stopped, and wounded men were transported several miles away to casualty clearing stations – often set up in tents – or makeshift field hospitals in abandoned buildings.

As well as physical wounds, many soldiers developed a condition called 'shell-shock', with symptoms ranging from headaches and tremors to partial paralysis. It was often viewed with suspicion, with some doctors believing patients with shell-shock were malingering – making up their symptoms to avoid the front lines. Treatment varied from giving patients a hot meal and a warm bed away from the fighting, to offering talking therapies or administering electric shocks.

ENDING THE STALEMATE

After four years of fighting, in 1918 the war finally came to a close. The Allies had learned bloody lessons at the battle of Somme (*see page 39*), which inspired groundbreaking new tactics that were published in training manuals. Changing the rulebook resulted in key breakthroughs in 1917, such as the battle of Messines – the first completely successful British battle of the war on the whole of the Western Front.

These new tactics were combined with new technologies – like tanks, which offered vital protection against machine guns – and became the bedrock of the 'all-arms warfare' of 1918. The stalemate was over: in just over 100 days, the Allies finally smashed their way through the German trenches.

WORDS: RHIANNON DAVIES

HELL ON EARTH

The battle of the Somme offers a powerful reminder of the brutal reality of trench warfare

At 7.30am – designated 'Zero Hour' – on 1 July 1916, over 200,000 men of the British Army emerged from their trenches in the Somme Valley, northeastern France. They were met by a relentless barrage of machine-gun, rifle and artillery fire from the German positions. This assault, which had been part of an Anglo-French plan to break through the German lines, quickly unravelled, deteriorating into a waking nightmare. Before the day was out, over 57,000 casualties – including 19,240 deaths – made that day, the first of the battle of the Somme, the bloodiest in British military history.

PLANNING THE BIG PUSH

During the winter of 1915–16, Allied commanders had agreed to a French-led strategy for a joint attack astride the River Somme where the Anglo-French armies met, aimed at repulsing the Germans from northern France. Having borne the brunt of the fighting since 1914, the French were keen for the British to step up. But a surprise German attack on the town of Verdun in February 1916 forced France to commit huge resources to its defence, leaving the British to shoulder most of the logistics for the upcoming summer offensive.

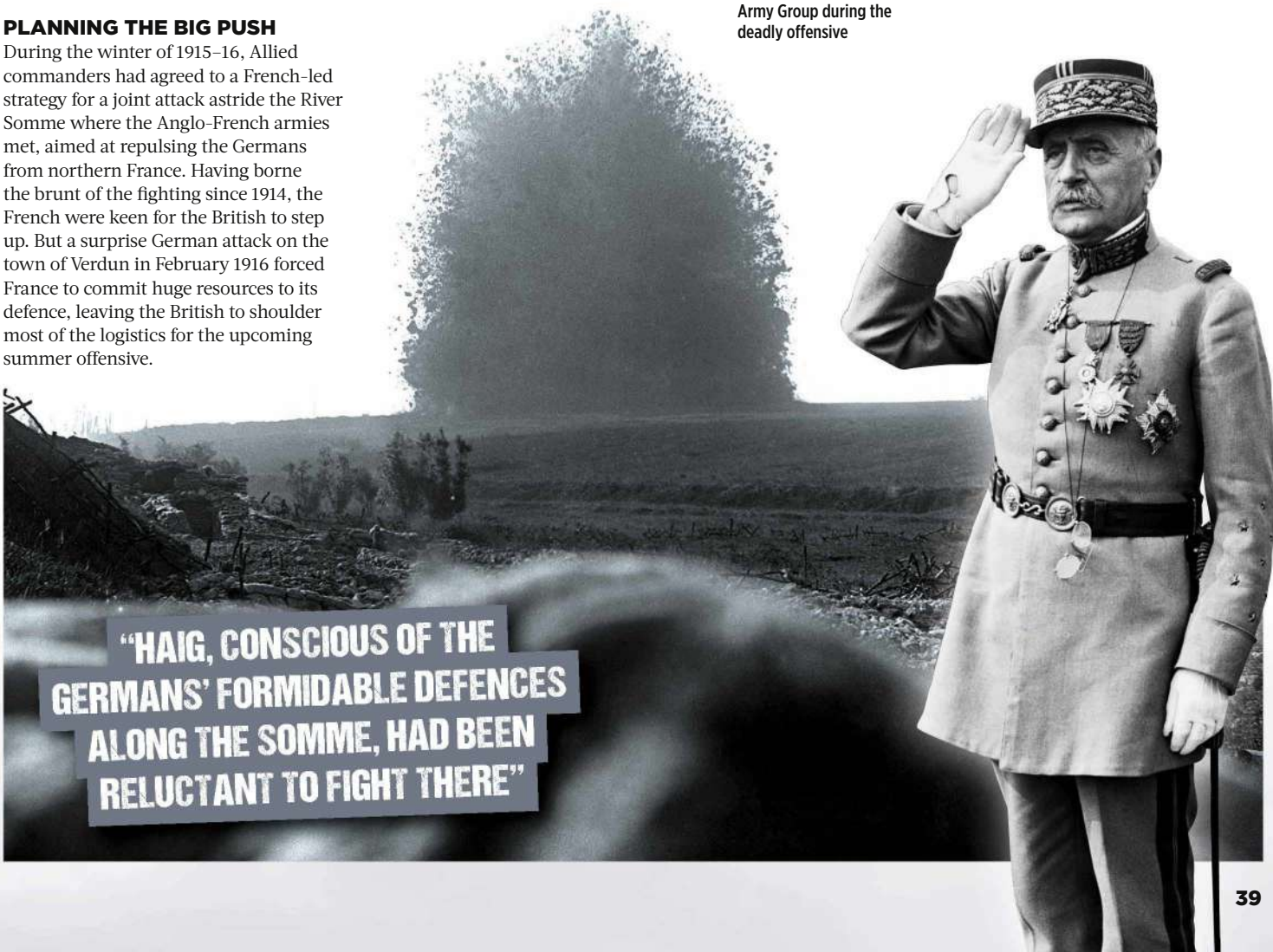
General Sir Douglas Haig assumed command of the British armies in December 1915, while General Ferdinand Foch headed up the French. Haig, conscious of the Germans' formidable defences along the Somme, had been reluctant to fight there. Rather, his preference had been to strike from the Ypres Salient in the summer of 1916 with the aim of securing the Belgian coast for the landing of further troops.

But as the junior partner in the coalition, the British complied with their insistent ally. Haig planned for the British Fourth Army, under Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Rawlinson's command, to overrun the Germans in the centre, while the Third Army to the north and the French Sixth Army in the south were to coordinate a diversion. Lieutenant-General Sir Hubert Gough would then lead the Reserve Army to sweep in and mop up the German position.

The Somme was to be the theatre in which Britain's 'New Armies' would take a leading role for the first time since hostilities had broken out. They were created as a result of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee's highly successful recruitment campaign from late 1914 into early 1915. Though far from battle-hardened, many of these recruits had gained experience on patrols and trench raids. As well as these volunteers,

BELOW: **A British mine explodes on Hawthorn Ridge on 1 July 1916, signalling the start of the Somme campaign**

BELOW RIGHT: **General Ferdinand Foch led the French Northern Army Group during the deadly offensive**



"HAIG, CONSCIOUS OF THE GERMANS' FORMIDABLE DEFENCES ALONG THE SOMME, HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO FIGHT THERE"

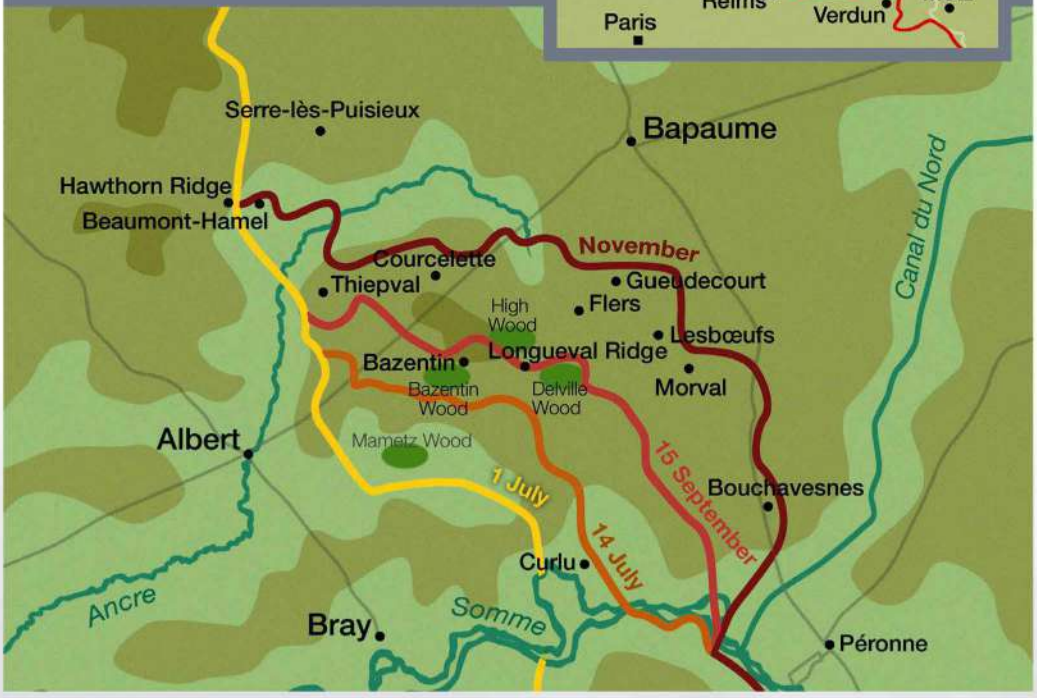
GETTY IMAGES X2

RIGHT: **A British Mark I tank, broken down en route to attack Thiepval on 25 September 1916**

BELOW: **Rows of unknown French (*left*) and British (*right*) graves at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in Picardy, France**

THE SOMME OFFENSIVE

The map on the right shows the front line at the start of the battle of the Somme, and the Hindenburg Line, to which the Germans eventually retreated in 1917. The map below shows the front line on 1 July, 14 July, 15 September and at the close of the battle in November 1916, when the Allies had captured nearly 100 square miles from the Germans.



GETTY IMAGES X6, MAP: MARTIN SANDERS - MAPART.CO.UK

soldiers from all over Britain's vast global empire were deployed to the region ahead of the summer offensive.

On 24 June 1916, the British launched a preliminary seven-day artillery bombardment of the German positions. More than 1.5 million shells – of which around 30 per cent are believed to have been defective – rained down on the enemy, with the aim of obliterating German defences, guns and barbed wire. The deafening roar and crash of the shells had a shattering effect, leaving German soldiers unable to replenish food and water for a week. But the British salvo proved largely ineffective against the Germans' concrete dugouts and wire.

Due to bad weather, the infantry assault scheduled for 29 June was postponed until the morning of 1 July. Ten minutes before Zero Hour, the British detonated a large mine at Hawthorn Ridge, alerting the Germans that an attack was imminent. Meanwhile, the French struck with five divisions along an eight-mile front between Curlu and Péronne. As the British surged out from their trenches, the Germans were able to rapidly secure their own – and proceeded to unleash a maelstrom of bullets at the advancing infantry divisions.

HAIL OF BULLETS

Exposed, many British soldiers were mown down instantly, with shell holes, sunken roads and ridges offering the only

ABOVE: **Indian cavalry before an ill-fated charge on 14 July 1916**

RIGHT: **Canadians prepare an artillery bombardment prior to the battle of Flers-Courcelette**

protection. Lieutenant Alfred Bundy, who survived the first day, later wrote that there was an "impenetrable barrage" of bullets. In addition, each soldier carried around 30kg of cumbersome equipment, significantly reducing manoeuvrability and rendering evasion all but impossible. As the gunfire ebbed away later that day, groans and cries of pain from the injured and dying filled no-man's land.

To the south, the British enjoyed limited success, capturing Mametz with the assistance of French artillery. But having failed to achieve the desired breakthrough, the campaign continued, eventually entailing 12 individual battles – each with its own objectives and factoring in lessons learned from its predecessor. Indeed, Allied tactics improved, and the British captured the Longueval Ridge from the Germans on 14 July.

On 15 September, the British utilised tanks for the first time during a push to capture the German-held towns of Gueudecourt, Lesbœufs and Morval, while the Canadian Corps fought to take Courcelette. The tanks advanced by only 1.5 miles, and despite technical mishaps and strategic blundering, which caused senior officers to lose faith in their efficacy, the new machines would soon come into their own. Haig asserted that the German line would collapse if pressure was maintained.

As summer turned to autumn, Mouquet Farm and Thiepval fell to the British, while the onset of heavy rain transformed the battleground into a muddy quagmire. By 13 November, the final phase of the campaign unfolded along the River Ancre amid dreadful conditions. Finally, a last-ditch assault on the German salient near Serre-lès-Puisieux came to naught, and Haig ultimately brought the campaign to an end on 18 November.

Since that first day of unprecedented carnage, the British had captured nearly 100 square miles. Casualties totalled more than one million, with the British empire suffering 420,000 and the French 200,000; the Germans counted 450,000 killed or injured. Though failing to achieve a breakthrough, the Allies had delivered a blow to the German Army from which it never recovered.

The contribution of Britain's imperial soldiers during the campaign had a profound impact on their sense of national identity. From 14 July, an Indian cavalry division, a brigade from South Africa, and soldiers from Australia, New Zealand and Canada all fought on the Somme. The men of the British West Indies Regiment also played a vital role, deployed on lines of communication.

The Somme was the place where the British Army learned how to fight a modern, industrial war. The new technologies and tactics – particularly the new platoon tactics – were later distilled into the training manual *SS143*, and are still studied at Sandhurst today.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The Somme has become seared on Britain's memory of World War I. Yet, the brutality of battles like Passchendaele meant it was long regarded by veterans and the public as something of an afterthought. It was towards the end of the 20th century that it came to the foreground of popular memory, and, invariably, the subject of tropes and distortions that have largely muddied the reality. Additionally, the French and German experiences of the campaign have, until recently, been overshadowed.

"Haig's seemingly callous disregard for the catastrophic loss of life led to him being derided by some as the 'Butcher of the Somme'," argues military expert Taff Gillingham. "But his was a thankless task; required to convey optimism to those around him, while ordering his commanders to prepare for any eventuality against Germany's army – considered the greatest fighting force in the world at that time – Haig was the best person to meet the challenge.

"The horrors experienced by those who fought on the Somme – relentless artillery bombardment, obliterated woodlands and half-buried corpses – alongside survivor's guilt, left many veterans traumatised. But to dwell on this alone is to dishonour their memory and a struggle that ultimately prevailed over the Kaiser's militarism."

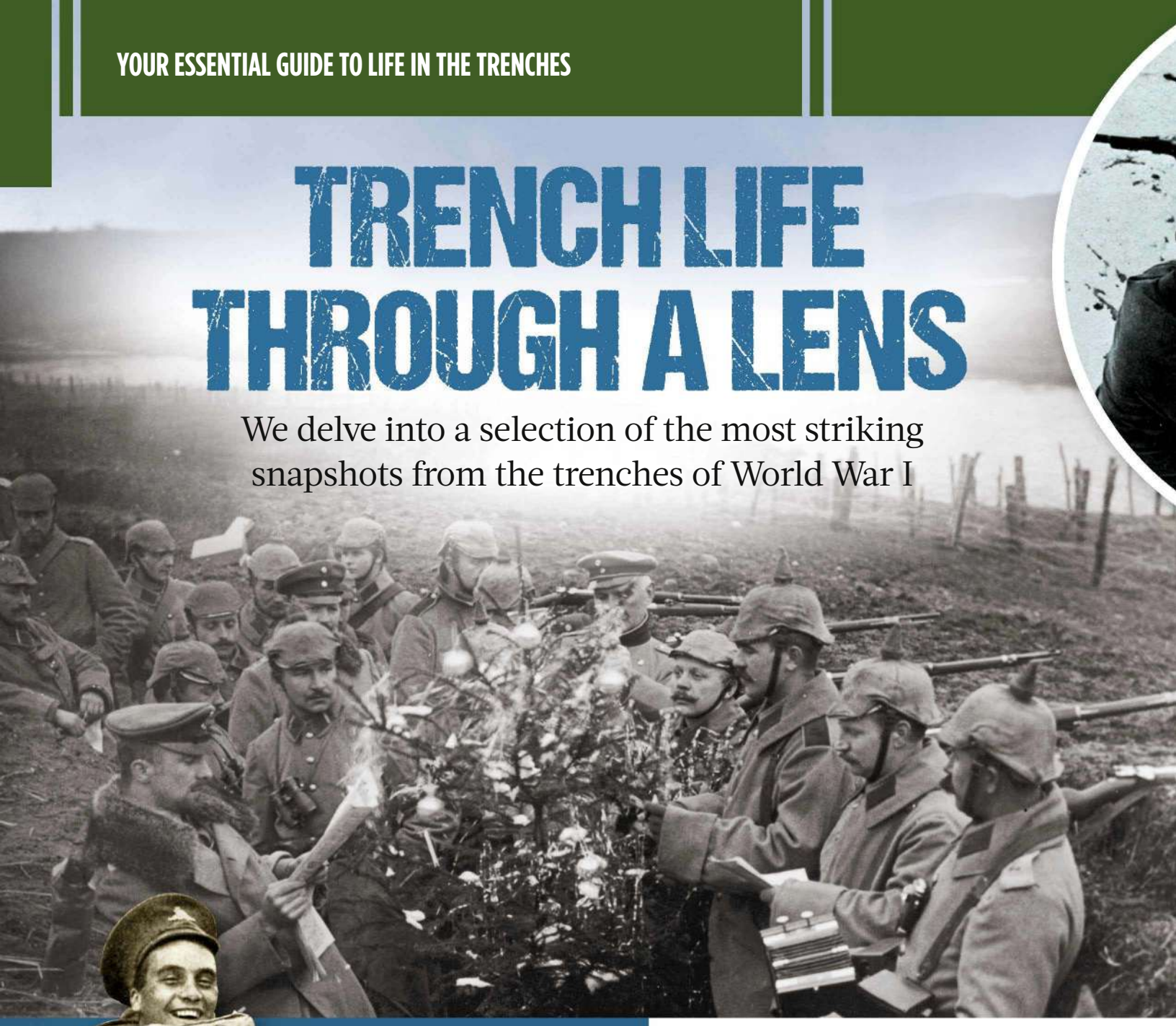
WORDS: DANNY BIRD

BELOW RIGHT: **A Hungarian poster advertising *With Our Heroes on the Somme*, a German propaganda film released in 1917**

BELOW LEFT: **General Sir Douglas Haig had confidently foreseen a British victory**

TRENCH LIFE THROUGH A LENS

We delve into a selection of the most striking snapshots from the trenches of World War I



A WELCOME SIGHT

◀ The arrival of letters and parcels from home was a highlight for soldiers stationed on the front line. The British Army Postal Service delivered around 2 billion letters during the war, with more than 19,000 mailbags crossing the Channel every day in 1917 alone.

TRENCH TAKEOVER

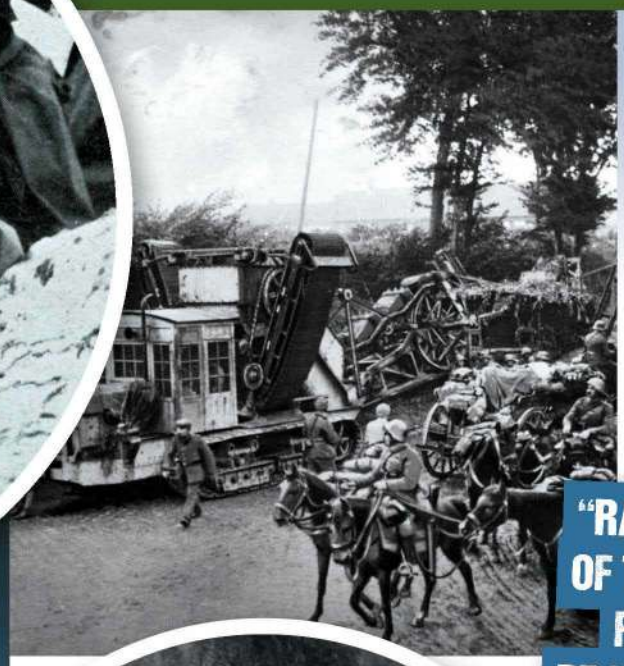
▶ Trench raids were a regular part of the ever-evolving nature of trench warfare and could provide essential information on the enemy's moves. Here, German troops salvage belongings left behind by Russian forces on the Eastern Front in c1915.

WARTIME FESTIVITIES

▲ Despite being far away from loved ones, soldiers on both sides of the conflict did their best to make Christmas as cheery as they could. Here, German troops gather around a Christmas tree in c1914, possibly during training.

DESPERATE DENTISTRY

▲ A bad tooth is a bad tooth, even when you're at war. This German soldier, pictured c1915, decides to have some dental work done while away from the front line – much to the quiet amusement of the fellow soldier next to him.



MUD-DIGGING MACHINES

◀ Digging trenches was hard, time-consuming work, but attempts were made on both sides to mechanise the back-breaking process, albeit with limited success. Pictured here is the German A7V-Schützengrabenbagger LMG trench digger, thought to be the only one of its kind made. Its lack of armour meant that it couldn't be deployed near the enemy, so its use was limited.

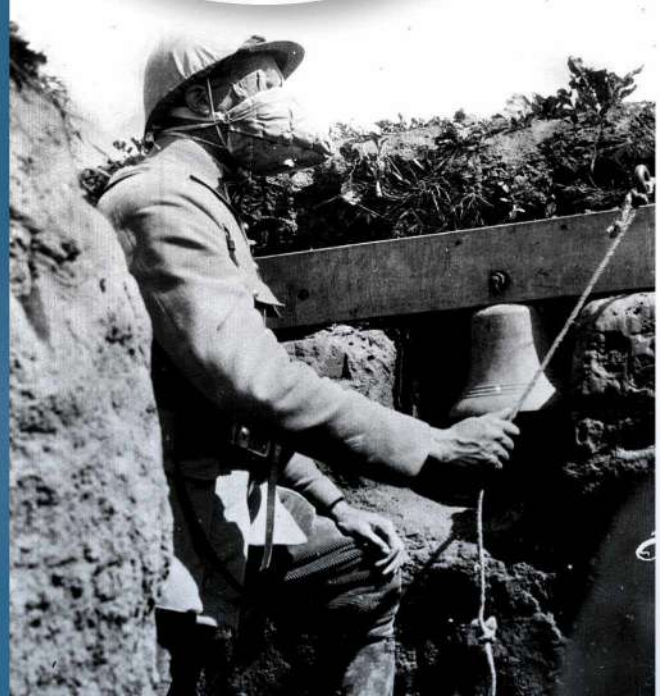
"RATS WERE THE SCOURGE OF TRENCH LIFE, DRAWN TO FOOD WASTE AND THE PROXIMITY OF DEAD BODIES"

CLEANING UP

▶ Maintaining basic standards of cleanliness was essential to sustaining morale, no matter how basic the facilities. Here, French soldiers take a morning wash on the Western Front – albeit well away from any danger – in c1915.

KEEPING OUT THE COLD

▲ Soldiers on both sides endured bitterly cold conditions when winter fell on the Western Front, as this young soldier, surrounded by huge icicles is testament to. The winter of 1916–17 saw temperatures drop to below -20°C at the Somme in northern France.



PREY ON DISPLAY

▲ Three German soldiers display an array of rats killed in their trench the evening before. Rats were the scourge of trench life, drawn to food waste and the proximity of dead bodies. Some soldiers trained up cats and dogs to deal with the constant infestations.

GAS WARFARE

◀ The first use of gas warfare took place in April 1915, when German troops released clouds of chlorine gas on Allied soldiers at Ypres, causing significant casualties. Initial anti-gas measures included cotton face pads soaked in a mixture of sodium hyposulphate and sodium carbonate, and sentries armed with gongs and bells positioned along the front line, ready to raise the alarm. ▶

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2

DAILY BREAD

◀ Keeping millions of hungry men fed and watered was a monumental task for all armies. To keep up with demand, field bakeries like this one, manned by German soldiers in c1914, were constructed to provide vast quantities of fresh bread for the troops.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

◀ As the trench system developed and expanded into a huge network, many trenches were given names as a way of identifying them. These would often be familiar names from home. Here, a soldier paints new trench signs, including Devils Dyke. Happy Alley, Kings X and Love Lane.

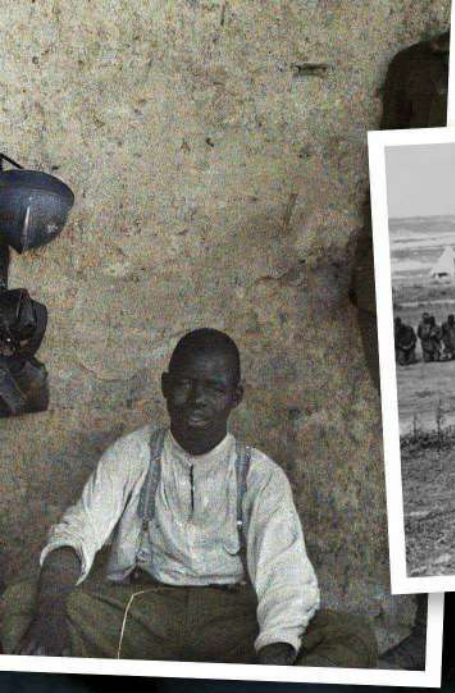
DID YOU KNOW?

MAN'S BEST FRIEND

Specially trained dogs were used by the Red Cross to find injured or dying soldiers in no-man's land. Carrying harnesses with medical supplies and water, the brave canines were sent out under the cover of darkness, saving countless lives.

TAILS OF WAR

▲ Over 16 million animals served in World War I, in a multitude of roles – from companionship to communication. This staged photo shows a German army dog leaping across a trench in France, carrying a message between outposts.



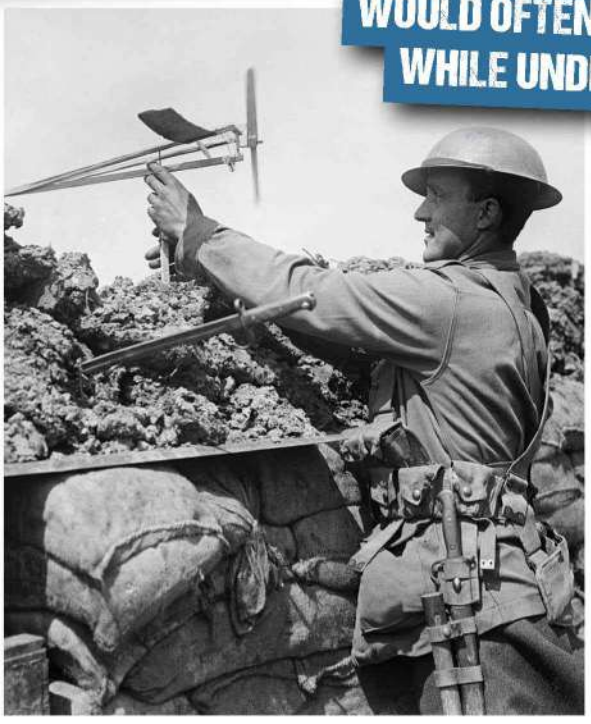
WE ALSO SERVED

▲ A group of Senegalese *tirailleurs* (infantrymen) take a rest in a shelter in the Alsace region of France, surrounded by rifles and equipment. Nearly 200,000 men from across French West Africa (referred to collectively as 'Senegalese') fought under the French flag during World War I, many of whom were sent to the Western Front.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

◀ Soldiers of the 17th Service Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment say a prayer before entering the trenches. Thousands of chaplains, priests, rabbis and imams travelled to the front line to offer spiritual services to the troops, many of whom would never return home.

"THOSE WITH SERIOUS WOUNDS WOULD OFTEN BE TRANSFERRED WHILE UNDER ENEMY FIRE"



GOING WITH THE FLOW

◀ A posed photograph shows a soldier of the 2nd Australian Division demonstrating the use of a wind direction indicator at Croix du Bac, near Armentieres, in May 1916. Assessing the direction and strength of the wind was crucial for providing warnings of potential gas attacks, and for planning Allied gas attacks on German trenches.

URGENT CARE

▼ The first port of call for injured soldiers was the Regimental Aid Post, set up within 200–300 yards of the front line, where basic first aid could be given. Those whose wounds were too serious to treat would be transferred, often under enemy fire, to Advanced Dressing Stations further back from the front line.

RESTING UP

▼ British soldiers take a well-earned break in captured German dugouts during the battle of the Somme, in 1916.

SAILING AWAY

▲ Heavy rain could cause untold misery and discomfort for those on the front line, and soldiers had to get used to wading around flooded trenches. These men, in Artois in 1916, are keeping their feet dry – for now – by using a boat to get around.

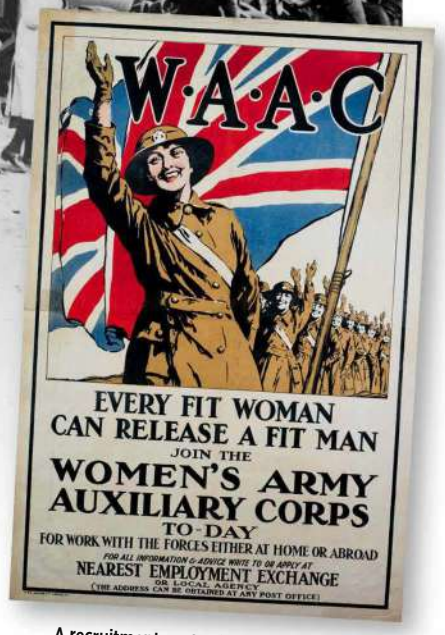
WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

GETTY IMAGES X9

Female ambulance drivers had to deal with temperamental vehicles and challenging terrain

SISTERS IN ARMS

Women played vital roles in the war effort, working as nurses and ambulance drivers


W·A·A·C
EVERY FIT WOMAN
CAN RELEASE A FIT MAN
JOIN THE
WOMEN'S ARMY
AUXILIARY CORPS
TO-DAY
FOR WORK WITH THE FORCES EITHER AT HOME OR ABROAD
FOR ALL INFORMATION & ADVICE WRITE TO OR APPLY AT
NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE
OR LOCAL AGENCY
(THE ADDRESS CAN BE OBTAINED AT ANY POST OFFICE)

A recruitment poster for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, set up to allow men to be diverted to active duty

When war broke out in July 1914, combat was very much seen as men's work. However, as the conflict dragged on, both the Allies and the Central Powers realised that they needed to rethink their attitude to who belonged on or near the battlefields.

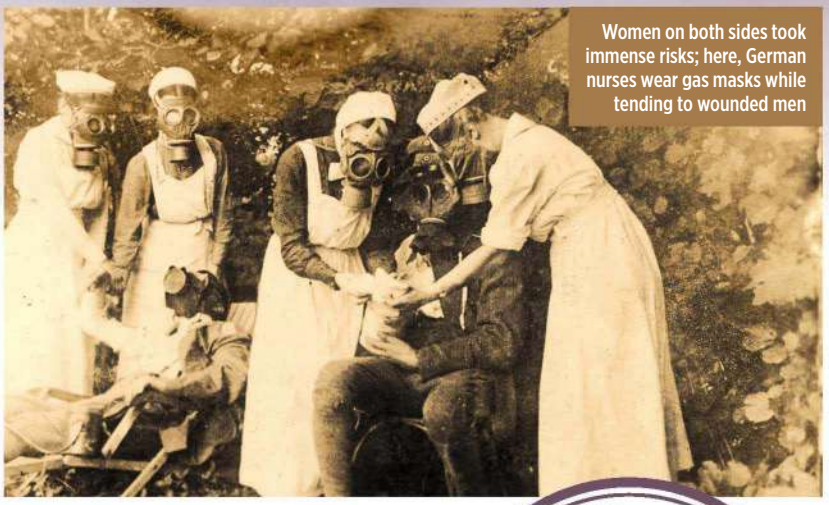
The war claimed staggering numbers of casualties, so both sides constantly needed to recruit fresh troops. But warfare wasn't just about going 'over the top'. People were needed to drive ambulances, nurse the wounded, operate telephone lines, cook for the troops and perform a long list of other behind-the-scenes tasks to ensure that military operations kept running smoothly.

Eventually, the British War Office realised that as many as 12,000 men were performing these crucial but non-combat services in France. In order to free up men to send to the front, recruitment began to find women to perform these roles – and many were eager to take up the challenge. In December 1916, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was set up, its numbers eventually swelling to 9,000 in France alone; thousands more joined Voluntary Aid Detachments to offer nursing care. In 1917, Russia even formed a 'Women's Battalion of Death', though rather than a great stride forward for gender equality, this was merely a propaganda exercise designed to shame war-weary men into fighting harder.

In 1917, Russia formed a 'Women's Battalion of Death' – but this was a propaganda exercise designed to shame men into fighting harder

Although women didn't actually hunker down in the trenches, many witnessed the brutality of war first-hand – especially nurses. Sophie Hoerner, who worked at a hospital near Étaples, wrote: "No one could imagine the horrors of a war like this unless they are here and could see for themselves. I have never seen such awful wounds."

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X5



Women on both sides took immense risks; here, German nurses wear gas masks while tending to wounded men

Female nurses performed all manner of duties, ranging from dressing injuries to administering anaesthesia during surgery. In fact, some hospitals were staffed entirely by women.

Crucially, women also helped transport wounded men to the hospitals, driving ambulances to the trenches to retrieve injured soldiers – and sometimes dodging artillery fire to do so. One sergeant wrote of these female drivers that: "When the cars are full of wounded, no one could be more patient, considerate or gentle… but when the cars are empty they drive like bats out of hell!"

DID YOU KNOW?

ADVANCE PARTY

By the time the first American troops joined the fray in October 1917, female US Army nurses were already hard at work in the war zone. In June 1918, more than 3,000 American nurses were tending to Allied soldiers in British-run hospitals in France.

DRIVING FORCE OF NATURE

Although many of the women who served have been forgotten, one who travelled to the front remains a household name: Marie Curie. Determined to diagnose soldiers' injuries as quickly as possible, the Nobel-winning physicist invented the 'little Curie' – a vehicle retrofitted to serve as a travelling X-ray unit that could be driven straight to the affected. Twenty such vehicles were built; Curie even learned to drive them so that she could captain one of her 'little Curies' herself.

By the time World War I came to an end, another battle was reaching fever pitch. Demands for female emancipation grew stronger than ever: women insisted that, having volunteered their services and risked their lives for their country, they should have a say in its future. Within a decade, all women in Britain over the age of 21 had the right to vote.

WORDS: RHIANNON DAVIES

French medical staff use a 'little Curie'. Named after its inventor, Marie Curie, the X-ray device could be driven straight to the front

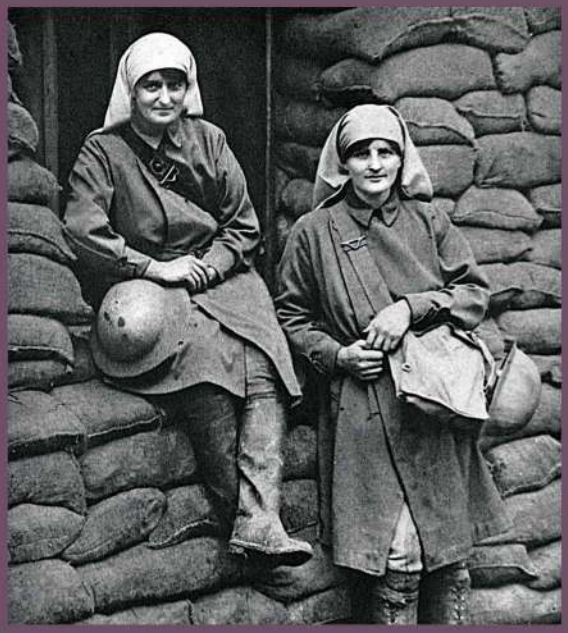
THE ANGELS OF PERVYSE

Two intrepid female motorcyclists risked their lives to nurse wounded soldiers

Divorced mother Elsie Knocker and teenager Mairi Chisholm may have seemed like an unlikely pairing, but they were friends who shared one big passion: a deep love of motorcycles. When war was declared in 1914, they were both determined to 'do their bit'. They signed up with the Flying Ambulance Corps set up by Dr Hector Munro and were sent to the Belgian front.

Their job was to drive soldiers – many of whom had suffered terrible wounds – from the front line to the hospital, while dodging enemy fire. In doing so, many of the wounded died in their ambulance before reaching the hospital. The two women decided something had to be done, and they established an independent dressing station at Pervyse, a village in west Flanders. Mairi, who had no formal nursing training, simply learned on the job from Elsie.

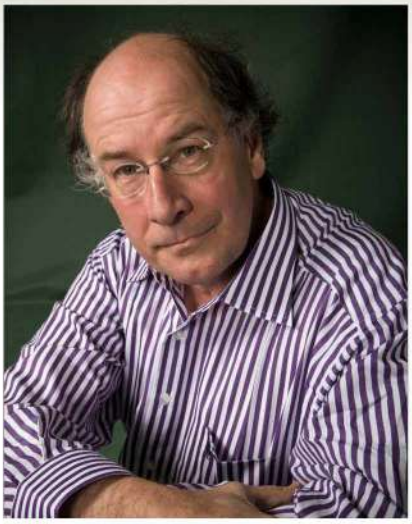
What set this dressing station apart was that it stood a mere 90 metres from the front line, enabling the two women to tend to soldiers' wounds almost immediately. That also put it at risk from wayward shells, which forced Elsie and Mairi to shelter underground and tend to their patients in the basement. Then, in March 1918, poison gas released by the Germans reached the hospital. The afflicted women left for Britain, though Mairi returned briefly to Pervyse to help more soldiers.



ABOVE: Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm pictured at the dressing station they established near the front line in Pervyse, west Flanders

INSET, TOP: Knocker and Chisholm care for a soldier. They had earlier driven ambulances carrying wounded troops from the front to hospital

MEET THE EXPERT



PETER HART is the former oral historian at the Imperial War Museum, London, and the author of numerous books, including *Laugh or Cry: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (Pen & Sword Military, 2022), written with Gary Bain. To hear Peter discuss life in the trenches on the *HistoryExtra* podcast, scan the QR code shown above or visit *historyextra.com/trench-life-qa*

PETER HART ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD WAR I TRENCH WARFARE

“Even when out on rest periods they were constantly training for the next ‘big push’”

The trenches of the Great War have attained a mythical status. A highly complex system of warfare has been reduced to a cliché – one of mud, blood and rats as big as cats.

Trenches evolved from the simple desire to take cover. At times in 1914, the Allies would be lying in a muddy, shallow ditch filled with freezing water, with the Germans occupying higher ground and sniping them if they showed themselves even for a moment. It was misery personified. Gradually the trenches were deepened, with duckboards laid down and even simple drainage measures introduced as the different sections joined together to provide a front line. Then communication trenches were dug, stretching back away from the front to allow men, food rations and munitions to get forward. Before long, a second and then a third line would be carved out, and eventually there would be a whole second trench system, with switch lines and redoubts to break up any attacks.

A new way of life developed, with soldiers moving forward into the front line for three days, followed by three days in the support lines, then back into the reserve lines or out to rest. But even when out on rest periods they were dogged by the need to provide working parties – and, of course, they were constantly training for the next ‘big push’. The trenches brought a grim stalemate to warfare, assisted by a combination of barbed wire, rifles, machine guns and – worst of all – long-range artillery.

In fact, the trenches were dominated by artillery. There would be artillery observers in the forward observation posts or flying high above them in aircraft, but the guns themselves were miles behind the line. Anyone and everyone in the trenches was at risk from shells, their course guided by minute changes to the range and direction by the opposing aircraft gunners. Should they move left, right, or stay where they were? It was impossible to know, and the stresses were enormous – hence the development of ‘shell-shock’. The condition wasn’t properly understood at the time, but it was a natural human reaction to such strain.

There was an answer to trench warfare, which eventually emerged in 1918. The ‘all-arms battle’ developed by the British and French was a powerful, flexible system using tanks to flatten the wire and ‘take out’ strong points; gas shells to swamp a whole area with poison gas; aircraft to strafe guns, trenches and communications; artillery to provide creeping and standing barrages; masses of machine guns; innovative platoon and section-based infantry tactics; and new weapons like trench mortars or rifle grenades to give the infantry their very own ‘artillery’. Even the cavalry had a use as the only fast-moving military resource to exploit any breakthroughs.

The answer wasn’t simple, but the ‘all-arms battle’ broke the iron grip of the trenches.

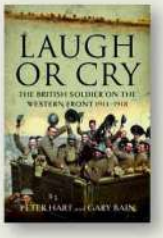
New innovations – such as the advent of tanks – helped end the stalemate of trench warfare, says Peter Hart

GETTY IMAGES X2

GET HOOKED

Learn more about World War I history with our pick of key resources

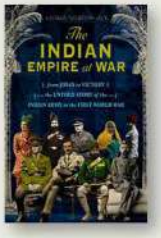
BOOKS



Laugh or Cry: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914–1918

By Peter Hart and Gary Bain (Pen & Sword Military, 2022)

Humour often helped the British soldier survive the terrible experiences they faced in the trenches of the Western Front, as Peter Hart and Gary Bain explore here.



The Indian Empire at War: From Jihad to Victory, the Untold Story of the Indian Army in WWI

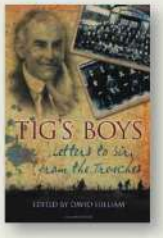
By George Morton-Jack (Little, Brown, 2018)

George Morton-Jack retraces the footsteps of the Indian Army's 1.5 million men who, in 1914–18, served across the globe: from Europe to Africa, Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Elsie and Mairi Go to War: Two Extraordinary Women on the Western Front

By Dr Diane Atkinson (Preface Publishing, 2009)

Diane Atkinson shares the story of Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm, the so-called 'Angels of Pervyse' who risked their lives to nurse wounded soldiers on the front line.



Tig's Boys: Letters to Sir from the Trenches

Edited by David Hilliam (Spellmount, 2011)

Discover a remarkable collection of letters written by the boys of Bournemouth Grammar School to their headteacher, Dr Edward 'Tig' Fenwick, sharing their experiences of trench life.

ON THE BBC

BBC RADIO 4

◀ Voices of the First World War

bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/b03t7p9l

Dan Snow brings together highlights from the sound collections of Imperial War Museums and the BBC to tell the story of World War I through the voices of those who were there.

BBC RADIO 3

◀ Sunday Feature: Dawn on the Somme

bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b07j3m4w

Kate Kennedy explores the Somme through the lives of British composers and musicians who fought on the battlefields of Picardie in 1916, such as composer and poet Ivor Gurney (*pictured left*).

BBC WORLD SERVICE

◀ Tanzania: Race and Colonial War

bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02sx6x6

Audrey Brown chairs a discussion on the effects of World War I in Africa, exploring the stories of African fighters on both the German and British sides.

ONLINE AND AUDIO

▶ For podcast episodes, features, quizzes and more on World War I, scan the QR code shown right, or visit *historyextra.com/period/first-world-war*

▶ The Western Front: a cauldron of innovation

Nick Lloyd reveals how the Western Front was shaped by transformative military and technological advancements. Listen at *bit.ly/3LM4maW*

▶ Life in the trenches: everything you wanted to know

From daily routine and diet to warfare and survival, Peter Hart answers listeners' questions about life on the front line during World War I. Listen at *bit.ly/42pJWvr*

▶ The real trench runners of World War I

Historian Alexandra Churchill reveals what the conflict was like for the messengers or 'trench runners' of World War I. Read at *bit.ly/41l6TP3*

WATCH

They Shall Not Grow Old

(streaming on various platforms)

Released in 2018, Peter Jackson's BAFTA award-winning film uses expertly restored footage to create a vivid depiction of the conflict.

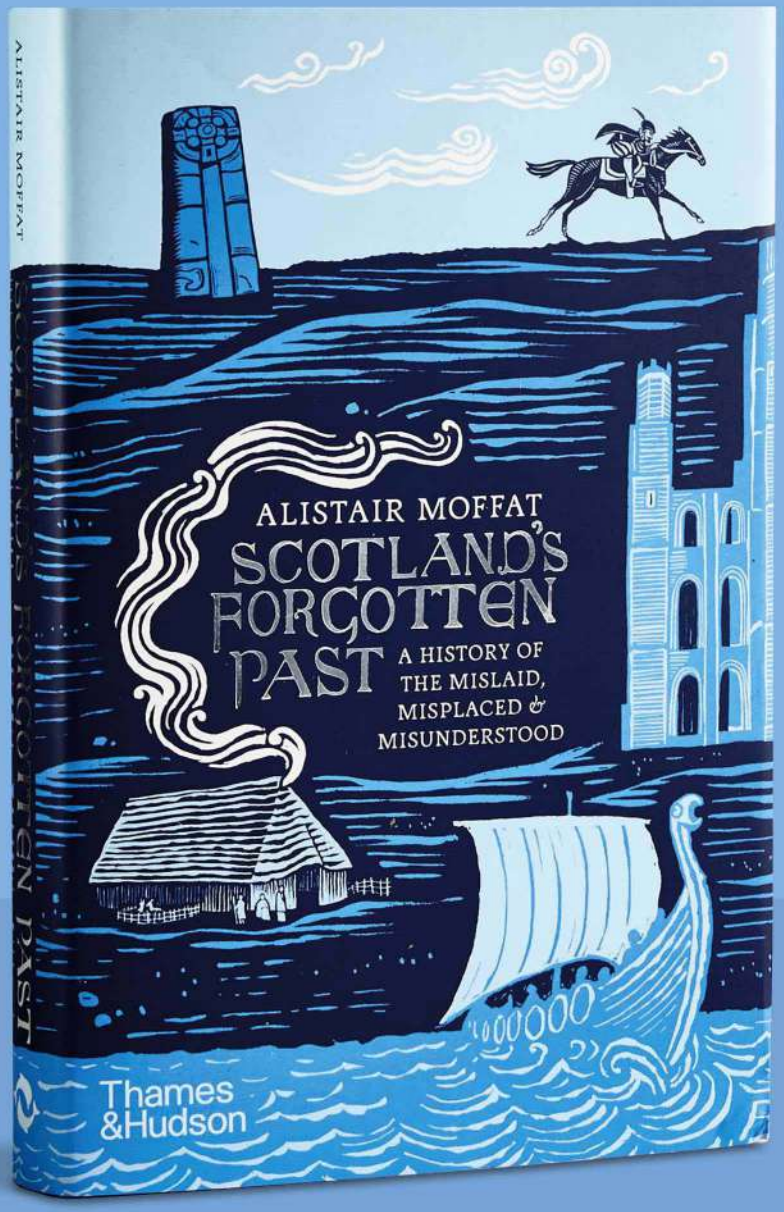
The Somme: From Defeat to Victory

(available on DVD)

First broadcast in 2006, this BBC One programme remains one of the best documentaries about the battle of the Somme ever produced.

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1, BBC X1, COURTESY OF THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD/WINGNUT FILMS/PETER JACKSON X1

FROM PIRATE KINGS TO PETER PAN WITH A LITTLE BIT OF SHAKESPEARE, DISCOVER A HIDDEN WORLD OF SCOTTISH SECRETS



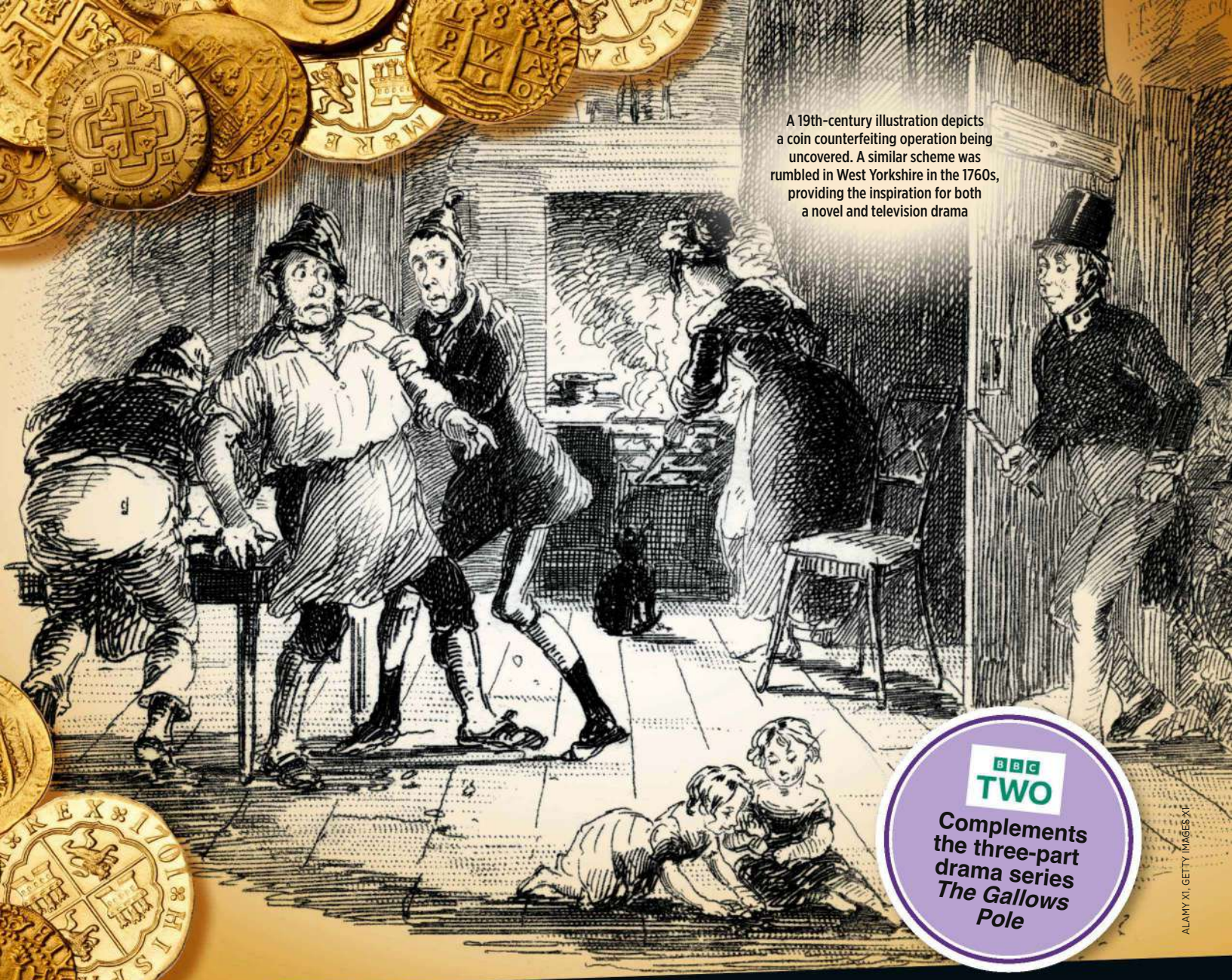
'Illuminating, neglected or misunderstood episodes in Scotland's history, this book deserves a place on the school curriculum'

The Scotsman

OUT NOW

thamesandhudson.com
and all good booksellers

Thames &Hudson



A 19th-century illustration depicts a coin counterfeiting operation being uncovered. A similar scheme was rumbled in West Yorkshire in the 1760s, providing the inspiration for both a novel and television drama

BBC TWO Complements the three-part drama series *The Gallows Pole*

ALAMY X1, GETTY IMAGES X4

THE YORKSHIRE COIN CONSPIRACY

Nige Tassell delves into the story of the Cragg Vale Coiners – the 18th-century counterfeiting gang whose efforts to make a dishonest living are dramatised in a gritty new BBC Two series

Thomas Turgoose, Charlotte Ockelton, Sophie McShera and Michael Socha (*left to right*) star as members of the Hartley clan in BBC Two series *The Gallows Pole*

"If the story of the Cragg Vale Coiners was a work of fiction, it would rank alongside the likes of *Treasure Island*, *Robin Hood* and *Oliver Twist*. The fact that it is a true story places its participants alongside infamous criminal legends such as Blackbeard, Jesse James and Dick Turpin."

The historian Steve Hartley – writing in his book *The Yorkshire Coiners: The True Story of the Cragg Vale Gang* – is quite correct when it comes to describing the extraordinary tale of a bunch of 18th-century counterfeiters from the West Riding whose nefarious activities nearly bankrupted the economy of the country. It's a brutal story of misdeeds, double-crossing and murder. As such, it's a tale that's ripe for the small-screen treatment, which it's about to receive courtesy of a three-part BBC Two drama directed by the acclaimed filmmaker Shane Meadows. *The Gallows Pole* is based on the award-winning novel of the same name by Benjamin Myers.

UNHAPPY VALLEY

The act of manufacturing counterfeit coins had occurred ever since metal coins were first introduced and accepted as common currency. Most of those who'd been tried and convicted of the crime had either worked alone or as part of a small outfit. Counterfeiting gold and silver coinage was outlawed by a 1696 Act of Parliament as an example of high treason, punishable by death. As a mark of the seriousness of the offence, it carried the same punishment as that imposed on someone found guilty of plotting to have the sovereign killed.

The Cragg Vale Coiners, based on the high ground of the Calder Valley between Leeds and Manchester, feared no law and took the practice to a never-seen-before level. They ran a sophisticated and layered operation involving a great many people in the local area.

Highly organised, they were highly disciplined, too. Should anyone involved in the operation even think of breaking rank and jeopardising the entire enterprise, the upper ranks of the pyramid would be swift to intervene, either with warnings of violence against the perpetrator or actual acts of physical harm. These were ruthless, unsentimental men. As one of the gang's acolytes in Myers' novel observes, "cross the Coiners and dig your plot".

The enterprise was headed by 'King David' Hartley, a local man who, with his family, lived in a very remote farmhouse, Bell House, on very remote moorland. Along with his brothers Isaac and William, the gang's first recruits were his neighbours on adjacent

BELOW: **The picturesque Cragg Vale as it appears today. High rates of poverty led some of its 18th-century residents to turn to lives of crime**

INSET: **Bell House, the farmhouse where gang leader 'King David' Hartley ran his illegal coinmaking operation**

"Like most other farmers in the area, the gang's first recruits were desperate men in search of alternative sources of income"

farms. Like most other farmers in the area, these were desperate men in search of alternative sources of income.

The slopes of Cragg Vale, a valley within a valley, are steep and sharp. The topography ensured that earning a living solely through farming in the 18th century was a precarious business. Many farmers had diversified, splitting their working lives between agriculture and weaving, with looms taking up space in their farmhouses. But while the wool industry of the West Riding prospered during the Seven Years' War thanks to the demand for worsted yarn used in the manufacture of military uniforms, the war's end in 1763 brought hard times for the industry's workers. Money was needed from other means in order to survive.

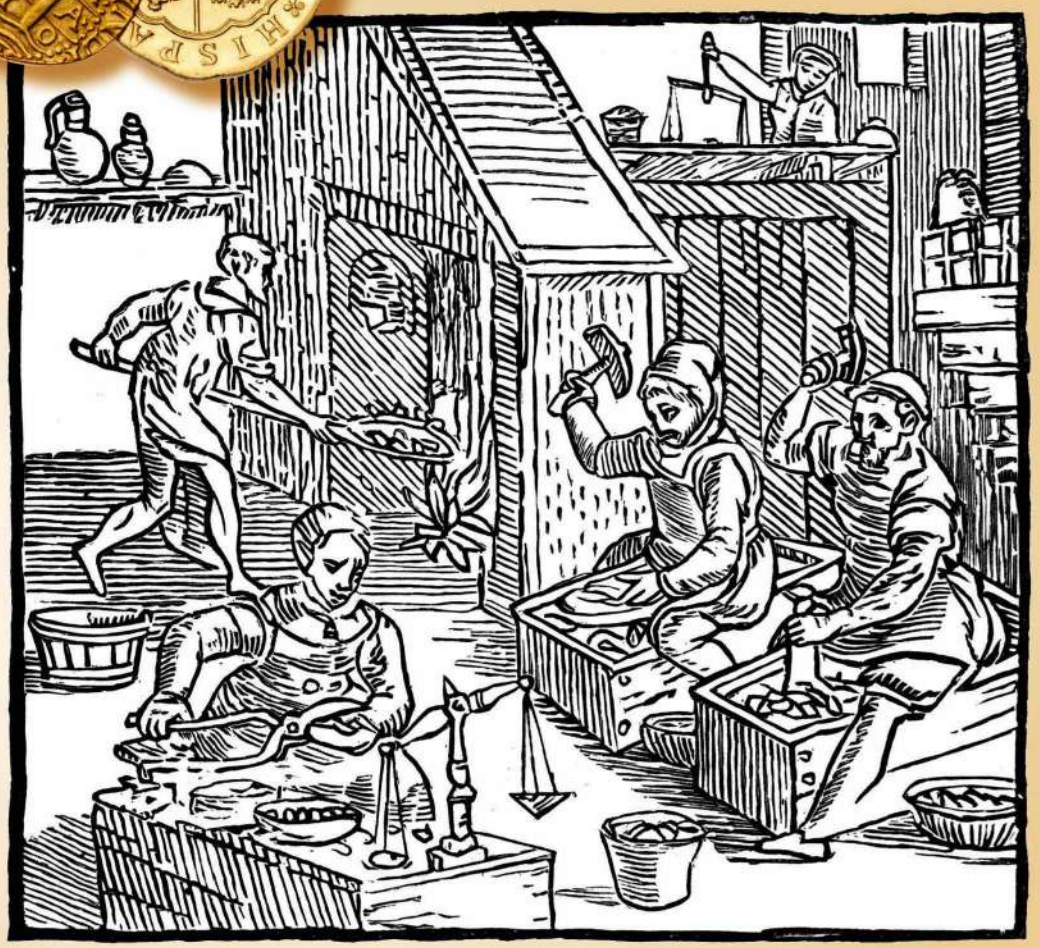
GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The Cragg Vale gang's particular modus operandi favoured the hard-up locals. Where other counterfeiters sent coins of an inferior standard, made from base metals, back into circulation, Hartley's operation maintained the purity of the new coins. Dealing almost exclusively in golden guineas, the gang filed down or clipped the coins' edges and collected the shavings. The original coins went back into circulation, but only a little smaller in size to avoid anyone noticing. The shavings were melted down to produce new coins, which were then stamped with a design – usually of a Portuguese nature, as Portuguese moidores were the most valuable of the foreign coins that were, at the time, legal tender.

Through local businesses, most notably the area's many inns and hostelries run by publicans happy to conspire with the fraud, the coins were now in general use. Also, the healthy amount of trade coming into the area from elsewhere ensured that a good supply of full-size guineas flowed in, eventually making their way up to Bell House.

These intact guineas came via local hands. By lending the gang coins, the citizens of the surrounding villages were rewarded financially. After the coins had had their edges shaved, these lenders had their original coins returned, plus a small amount of interest. The interest came from the value of the shaved metal, soon to be smelted and forged into coins again. Everyone benefitted. It was a victimless crime.

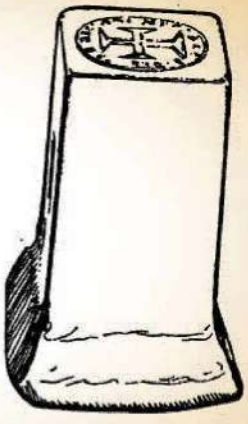
The financial institutions wouldn't have agreed. Estimations of the extent of the gang's operation suggests that the value of the counterfeit coins put into circulation may have been as much as £3.5m, the equivalent of more than £500m today. Their activities ended up devaluing the pound by nearly 10 per cent, a drop that put the solvency of the British economy in peril. The coiners' operation would eventually be debated in the Houses of Parliament as politicians sought to avoid copy-cat enterprises, "to prevent the mischief to which the public are thus exposed".



A 16th-century image shows a group of real coinmakers at work. The Cragg Vale gang clipped the edges of existing coins and used the shavings to make fake ones, thereby debasing the originals

TAKING THE BAIT

That was to come. For now, the Cragg Vale gang needed to be stopped. But their identity remained elusive, with law enforcement in such a remote, often meteorologically hostile location as the Hartleys' corner of the Calder ▶



A series of illustrations depicts a set of dies used to stamp the coins at Cragg Vale. A close-up photograph of the die in the centre, used to create an imitation Portuguese moidore, is shown far right

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1, ELEMENT PICTURES (GP) LIMITED/OBJECTIVE FEEDBACK LLC X1, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY X3, CALDERDALE LIBRARIES X1

HOW THE 'KING' EARNED HIS CROWN

The cunning – and occasionally violent – leader of the Cragg Vale Coiners was certainly not a man to be messed with

Born in 1730, 'King David' Hartley was undeniably the leader of the Cragg Vale gang. He is said to have served as an apprentice ironworker in the Black Country, where he initially became involved with clipping and forging coins, but returned to his native Cragg Vale concerned that his illegal activities might be easily discovered in the city. His exceedingly remote farm, high on a windswept moor, was perfect for resuming his coining business.

Along with his younger brothers Isaac and William – who, in line with his 'King David' nickname, were respectively known as the Duke of York and the Duke of Edinburgh – he ruled his coin kingdom firmly. A serious, intense person (in *The Gallows Pole*, his novelisation of the gang's story, Benjamin Myers writes of a "seldom-seen smile"), Hartley was a brutal man, not unaccustomed to using fists and force to bend others to his will. It's inaccurate to paint him as an altruistic, charming Robin Hood figure; that he forged a network of allies and associates was probably less to do with charisma and more with intimidation.

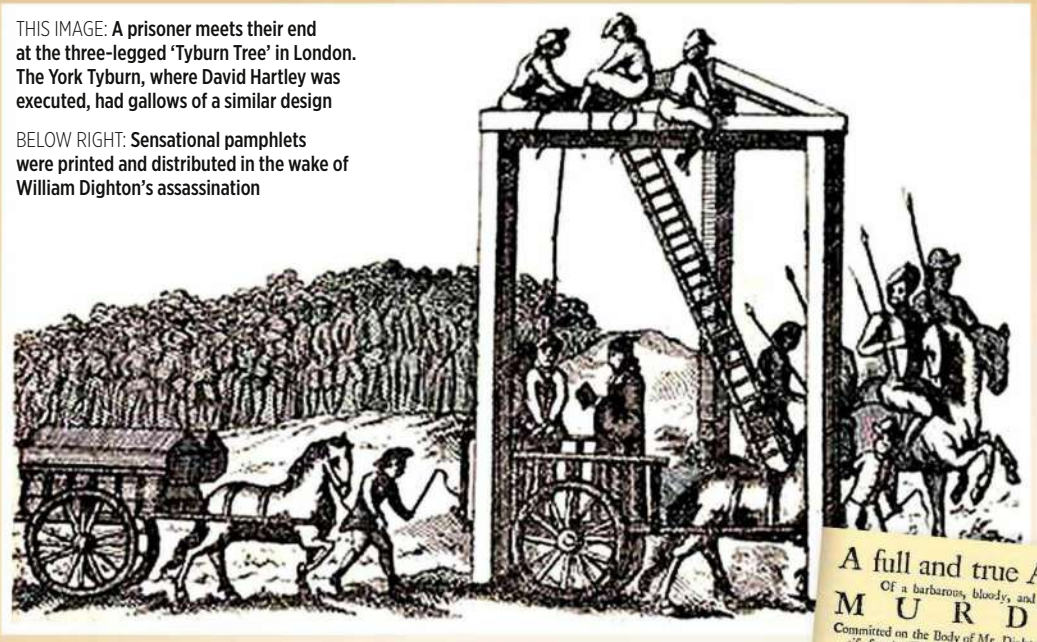
But Hartley was smart. Taking advantage of his formidable local reputation, as long as everyone around him was benefitting financially, his enterprise was relatively secure. As Myers writes, "the valley folk mythologised this gang leader whose behaviour they saw no harm in, so long as there was food on their tables and logs in their log stores".

David Hartley's grave in Heptonstall, where he is buried alongside his wife, Grace, and other family members

This is England star Michael Socha plays the notorious 'king' in Shane Meadows' new series

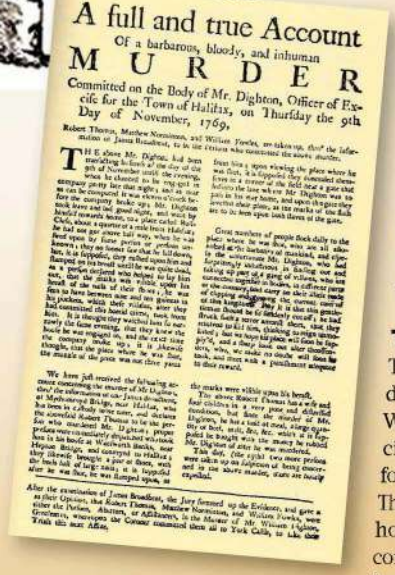
"Hartley was a brutal man, not unaccustomed to using fists and force to bend others to his will"

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X3, ELEMENT PICTURES (GP) LIMITED/OBJECTIVE FEEDBACK LLC X1, CALDERDALE LIBRARIES X1



THIS IMAGE: **A prisoner meets their end at the three-legged 'Tyburn Tree' in London. The York Tyburn, where David Hartley was executed, had gallows of a similar design**

BELOW RIGHT: **Sensational pamphlets were printed and distributed in the wake of William Dighton's assassination**



A full and true Account
Of a barbarous, bloody, and inhuman
MURDER
Committed on the Body of Mr. Dighton, Officer of Excise for the Town of Halifax, on Thursday the 9th Day of November, 1769.

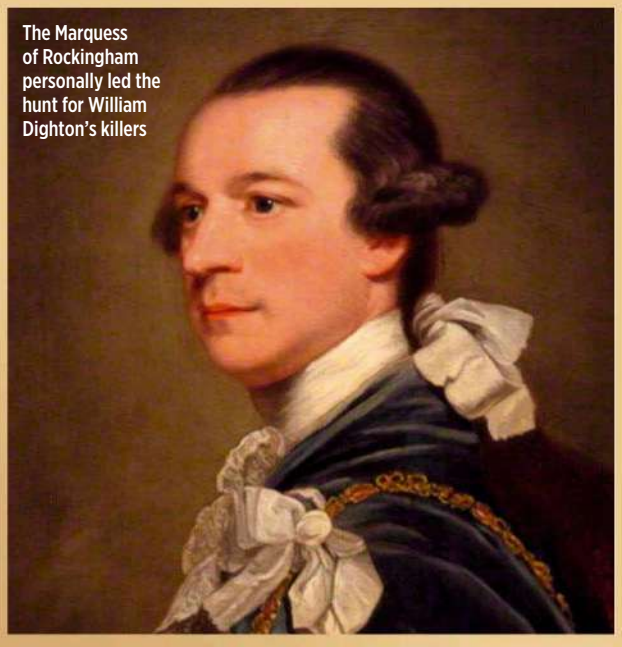
Valley non-existent. The brothers and their associates continued to prosper, unencumbered by suspicion and far from the prying eyes of both nosey parkers and the authorities. And from his lofty position, high above everyone else, 'King David' could gaze down on all that he was controlling. He was the area's unofficial royalty.

Although newspapers in Leeds had already speculated that a group of coiners near Halifax were producing counterfeit guineas, it took one of the gang themselves, James Broadbent, choosing to become an informant for the authorities to become aware of the Cragg Vale gang's existence. Wronged and ridiculed by the domineering 'King David', Broadbent met with William Dighton, the official who oversaw matters of excise for Halifax and the surrounding area. A reward of 100 guineas was offered in return for Broadbent detailing the depth of the criminality of the eldest Hartley brother and one of his closest associates, James Jagger. Broadbent, a figure on the fringes of the gang, took the bait, disclosing that he had personally witnessed the pair engaged in illegal coining activities. Dighton had his evidence, but failed to keep his end of the deal. Broadbent never saw the money. His decision to break ranks brought no reward.

In mid-October 1769, 'King David' Hartley was tracked down to the Old Cock Inn in Halifax and duly arrested. Dighton, armed with Broadbent's evidence, now believed that the gallows at York would be "honoured with the weight of royal blood". But if he thought that removing the lynchpin, the 'monarch', would mean the collapse of the gang, he was sorely deluded. Instead, the coiners were out to avenge their leader's capture and planned a demise of their own: that of Dighton himself.

A BULLET TO THE HEAD

The murder was arranged in an alehouse in Mytholmroyd, the nearest village to Bell House. Isaac Hartley was the author of the conspiracy. He offered the would-be killers 100 guineas from his own pocket, matching the amount Dighton had dangled before Broadbent. The job of ridding the gang of Dighton's attentions forever fell to two local farm labourers, Matthew Normanton and Robert Thomas. On 10 November 1769, the excise man was murdered near his home in Halifax, dispatched with a bullet to the head.



The Marquess of Rockingham personally led the hunt for William Dighton's killers

The cold-blooded assassination of a public official forced the government into further action. The former prime minister Charles Watson-Wentworth, aka the Marquess of Rockingham, was placed in charge of the manhunt for Dighton's killers. The marquess was ruthlessly efficient in his search. By Christmas, 30 members of the Cragg Vale gang had been rounded up and were in custody.

Robert Thomas had been arrested on suspicion of his involvement that November night in Halifax but, pleading that he hadn't fired the fatal bullet, wasn't charged with Dighton's murder. However, he was found guilty of highway robbery, having stolen valuables from the dead man's still-warm body. He was hanged in York in August 1774 and his body transferred to Halifax where it was put on display to deter anyone else who might be considering a similar line of work. Normanton went into hiding but was eventually captured and put on trial for coining. His guilty verdict also condemned him to be hanged.

TO THE GALLOWS

The Marquess of Rockingham didn't capture all his prey. With no direct testimony citing him for any involvement for coining activity, and with Thomas and Normanton holding their tongues about him commissioning the murder and funding the kill fee, Isaac Hartley evaded the authorities and lived at Bell House for the rest of his days, into the next century and well into his seventies.

His older brother wasn't so fortunate. By the time Thomas and Normanton went to the gallows, 'King David' Hartley had long since suffered the same fate. Tried in April 1770 on a charge of clipping four guineas, he was found guilty, largely based on Broadbent's testimony. By the end of the month, the lawless, seemingly formidable boss of the Cragg Vale Coiners had met the punishment dictated by that act of parliament. His body was hanging from the gallows at York Tyburn. The gang had been stopped and the king was dead.

GET HOOKED

WATCH

The Gallows Pole is now streaming on BBC iPlayer. For news about the latest historical dramas, scan the QR code shown here or visit *historyextra.com/tvradio*

WHAT GREAT PAINTINGS SAY

Fragonard's enigmatic, playful depiction of 18th-century romance has become an emblem of French Rococo art

The Swing

by Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 1767

Painted in 1767, some 20 years before the upheaval and bloodshed of the French Revolution, Fragonard's *The Swing* draws the viewer into a tale of clandestine romance. At the heart of the composition, a beautiful young lady, adorned in a flowing pastel pink dress, swings joyously above the ground, kicking her shoe into the air as her admirer, concealed in the foliage below, gazes up at her with a rapt expression of adoration and desire.

It has become Fragonard's most famous work, and one of the most emblematic images of 18th-century art, yet it remains shrouded in mystery.

BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE

"*The Swing* represents a turning point in Fragonard's career, and it really set him on a more liberating and experimental artistic path," says Dr Yuriko Jackall, curatorial head and curator of French paintings at The Wallace Collection. "As a student of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, his previous works had been more academic in subject matter, based on sources from literature or the Bible, and designed to instil a sense of morality in viewers. So creating *The Swing*, with its erotic undertones, was a huge change in direction, and one that opened up a whole new avenue of work for him."

The identity of the woman, and indeed the work's patron, is unknown. Much of what we know about the painting is taken from the journals and memoirs of writer Charles Collé, who describes how, in late 1767, the history painter Gabriel-François Doyen was commissioned by a 'gentleman of the Court' to paint his mistress on a swing. She was, according to Collé, to be pushed by a bishop, with the patron himself depicted below, admiring her legs. Doyen refused the commission and suggested that the patron approach Fragonard instead.

"Various names have been put forward as to who might have commissioned the piece," comments Jackall. "One theory is that it was created for the Baron de Saint-Julien, the tax collector for the French clergy, which could explain the initial request that the swing be pushed by a bishop. But no solid evidence has been found to support this theory, which may have been based on a mistake or a confusion of identity."

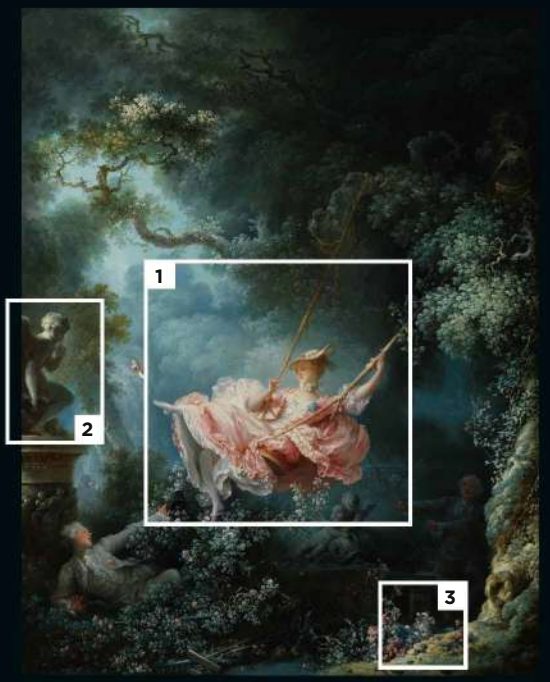
Indeed, whoever did commission the painting seems to have changed their mind about the bishop's inclusion. The swing is being pushed by an older gentleman, perched on the edge of a bench. Initially, he was thought to be a servant, but, according to Jackall, the quality of his clothes and the fact that a servant would not have sat in the presence of his master, dispels this theory.

Are we then, witnesses to an 18th-century love triangle? An older husband unwittingly pushing his young wife on a swing, unaware of the interaction between her and the young lover hidden in the bushes?

"In 2021, *The Swing* underwent gentle cleaning and restoration, and several new details were revealed, including the woman's garter at the top of her stocking, a detail that suggests she is not wearing undergarments. Clearly, this was not a painting designed for public consumption, and would have been a private work to be kept in a bedroom or cabinet," says Jackall. "It also marks the re-launch of Fragonard's career as a painter of small, cabinet pictures for a select circle of wealthy patrons.

Many of Fragonard's private patrons were guillotined or exiled during the French Revolution, and the collapse of the old order meant that depictions of the pleasure-seeking lifestyles of the French aristocracy no longer formed part of his artistic repertoire. But his reputation as one of the most prolific artists of the 18th century – the creator of more than 550 works, and the elegance and playfulness of works like *The Swing*, have seen him remembered as an icon of Rococo art.

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN



1. THE SWING
The woman's red velvet-cushioned seat and playful pose belies the fact that the ropes of the swing are fraying and the branches they are attached to look dead. Could the swing and its sitter come crashing down at any minute?

2. CUPID
The statue of Cupid, his finger to his lips as if he wishes us to keep a secret, was well-known to 18th-century viewers. It is a copy of Falconet's *Seated Cupid*, commissioned by Madame de Pompadour, one-time chief mistress of King Louis XV.

3. DOG
A fluffy white dog, almost lost among the foliage, is yapping anxiously at the woman on the swing.

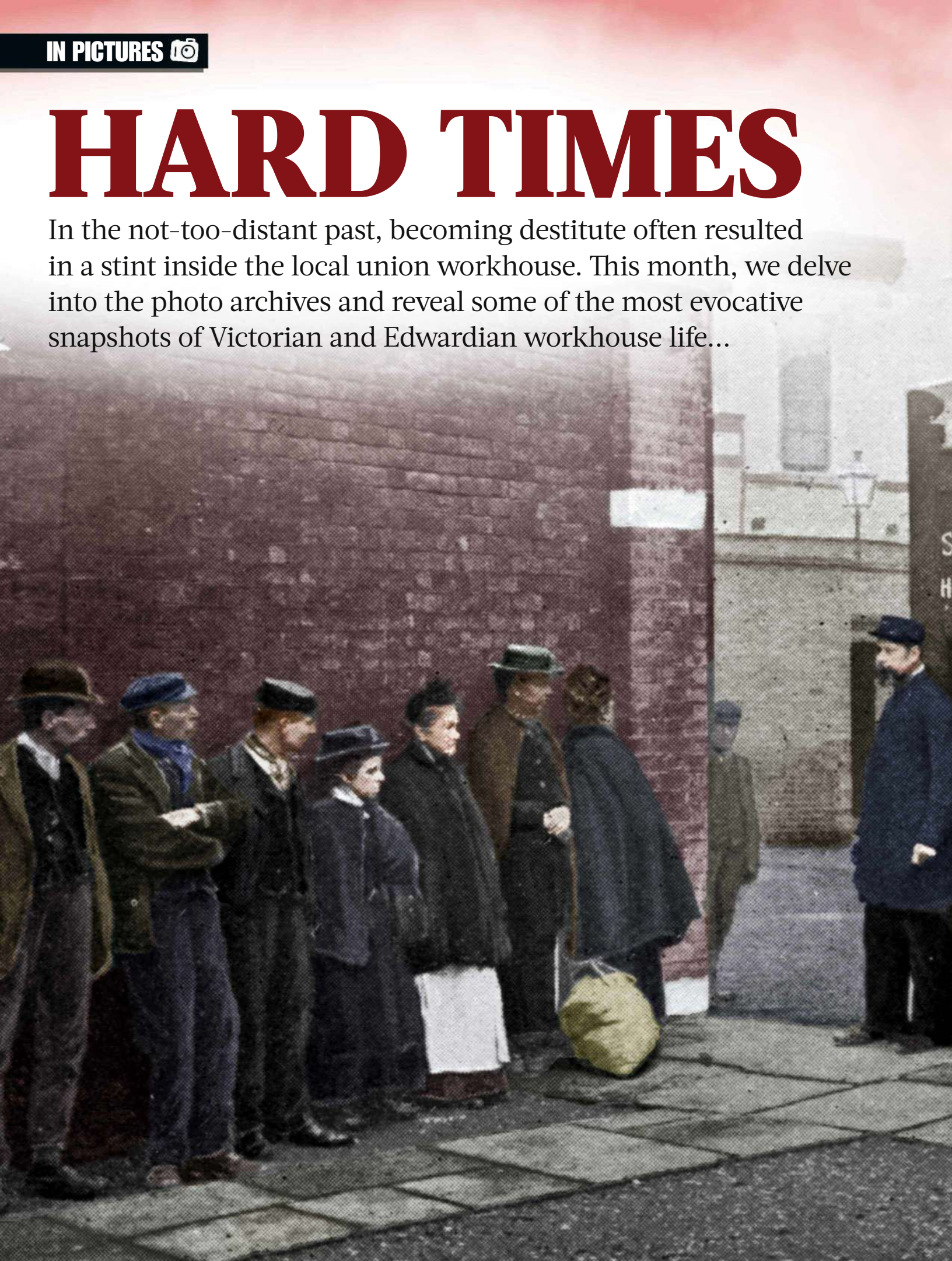
GET HOOKED

The Swing is on permanent show at The Wallace Collection, London. For more information about the painting, its restoration, and how to view it, visit *wallacecollection.org*

© THE TRUSTEES OF THE WALLACE COLLECTION

HARD TIMES

In the not-too-distant past, becoming destitute often resulted in a stint inside the local union workhouse. This month, we delve into the photo archives and reveal some of the most evocative snapshots of Victorian and Edwardian workhouse life...



YOUNG RESIDENTS, c1897

▲ Families entering the workhouse were split up, with children – such as these boys at Crumpsall Workhouse in Manchester – assigned to their own section. Children under seven, at the discretion of those in charge, were sometimes allowed to accompany their mothers in the women's ward, but for the most part, children only saw their parents during a designated 'daily interview'. From 1834, workhouse children were required to receive at least three hours of schooling per day, and most workhouses had their own school blocks.

JOIN THE QUEUE, c1901

◀ Not everyone who entered the workhouse did so on a permanent basis. In 1837, a new regulation dictated that any destitute person needing urgent shelter was to be given food and a bed for the night in return for completing a task of work. Over time, casual wards were introduced to workhouses, where the so-called 'casual poor' would be fed and allocated a bed for the night. Despite the basic accommodation – deliberately inferior to that of the main workhouse – demand was high, and it was prudent to join the admission queue in the late afternoon to be guaranteed a space. Here, a group of men and women queue outside St Marylebone Workhouse in London, hoping for good night's sleep and a full stomach.

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X1

WASH DAY, c1880

▲ Much of the day-to-day running of the workhouse was the responsibility of inmates, with women – such as those seen here hanging washing at an unknown workhouse – usually in charge of domestic chores like cleaning, kitchen work or helping in the laundry.

CHRISTMAS CHEER, c1906

▲ By the mid-19th century, Christmas was widely celebrated in the workhouse, with visits by guardians (who administered the workhouse), decorations, food and entertainment. Even Father Christmas eventually found his way to some workhouses, as seen in this snap of a children's dormitory at Belfast Workhouse in c1906.

TAKING THE AIR, c1901

▼ Segregated outdoor areas known as 'airing yards' were used by inmates for exercise and socialising. This one, at St Marylebone Workhouse in London, was created as part of a new phase of building at the site between 1897–1901.

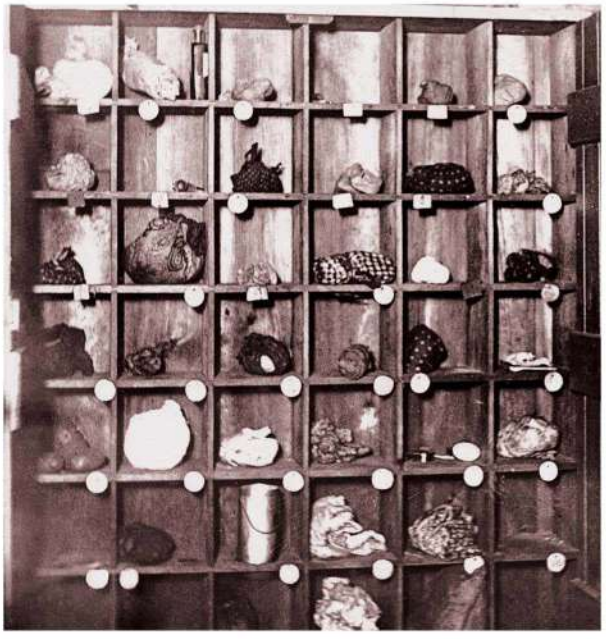
GETTY IMAGES X5, MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY X1

DIRTY WORK, c1880

◀ Men who were able to work would also be given daily tasks to perform during their time in the workhouse. This man, pictured at an unknown workhouse, has filled a wheelbarrow full of coal, ready to break into smaller pieces to be used in stoves and fireplaces.

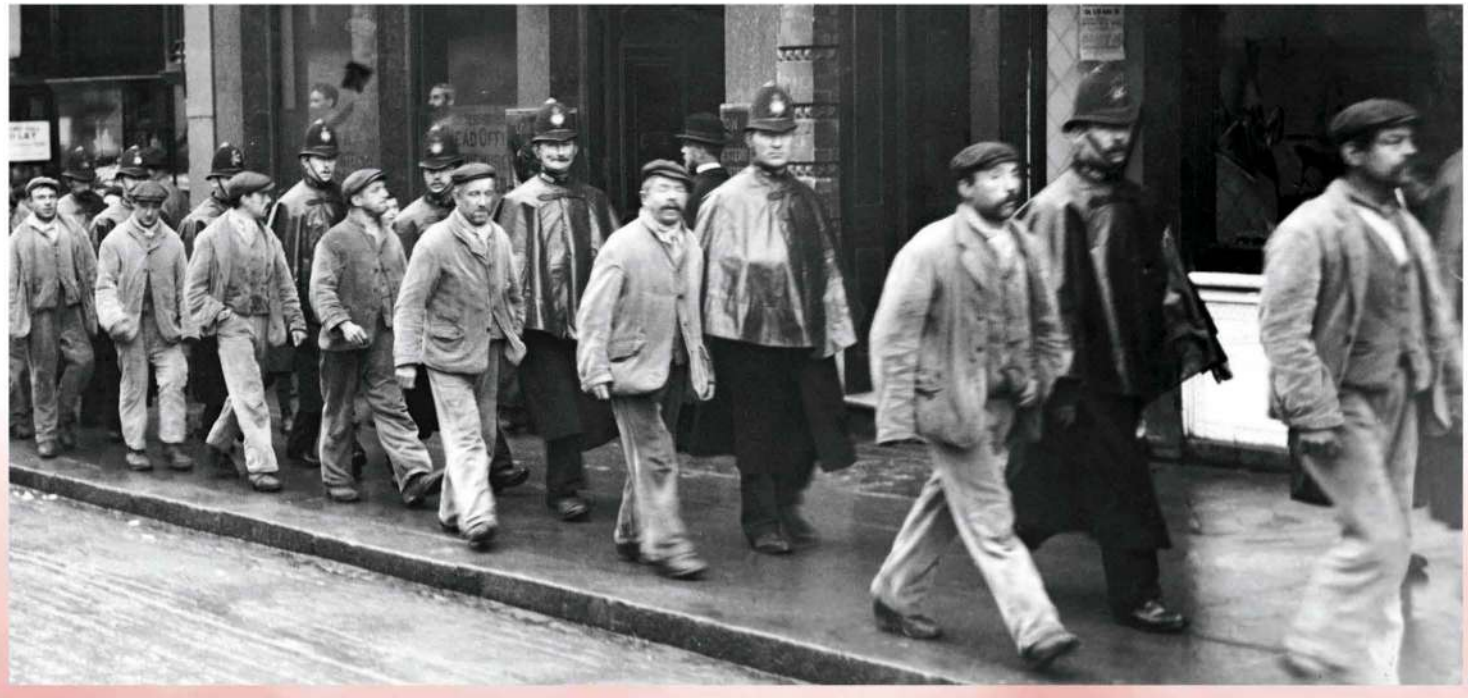
WORLDLY POSSESSIONS, c1880

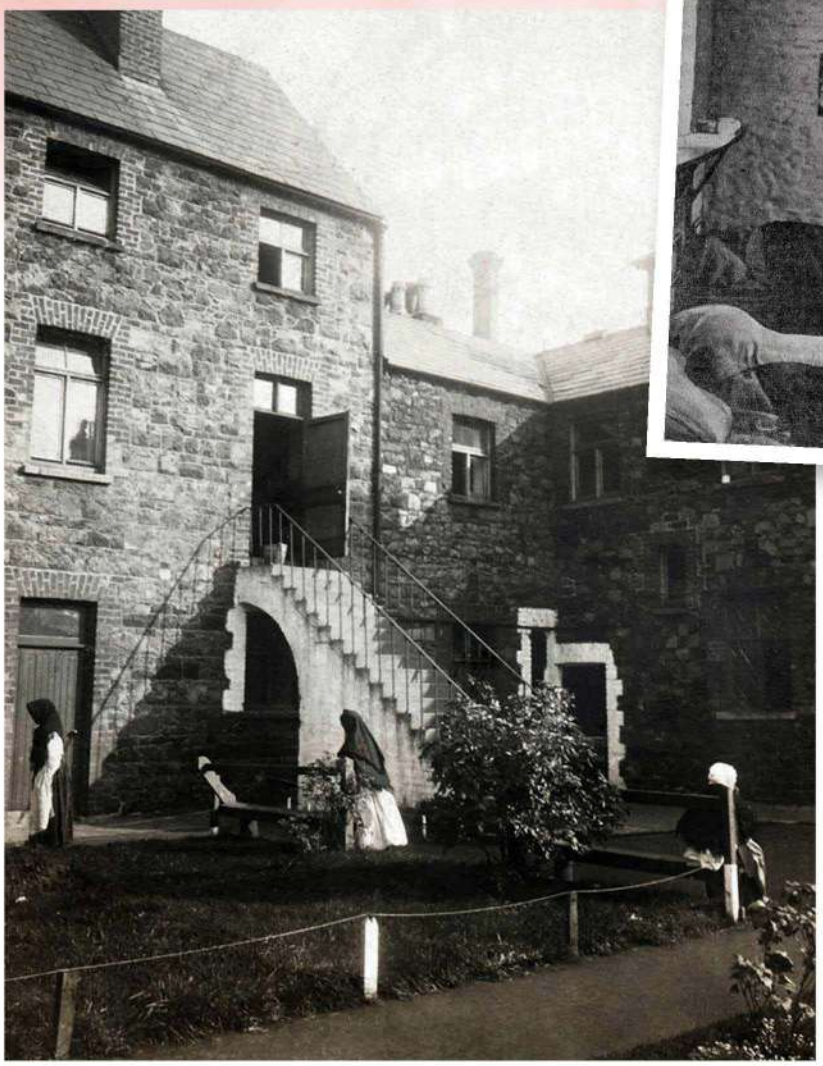
▼ On their entry to the workhouse, new inmates would be bathed before being issued with a standard workhouse uniform. Their own clothing would also be washed and disinfected before being put into a store – such as the one seen here – along with any other possessions they may have brought with them. These would only be returned when – or if – they left the workhouse.

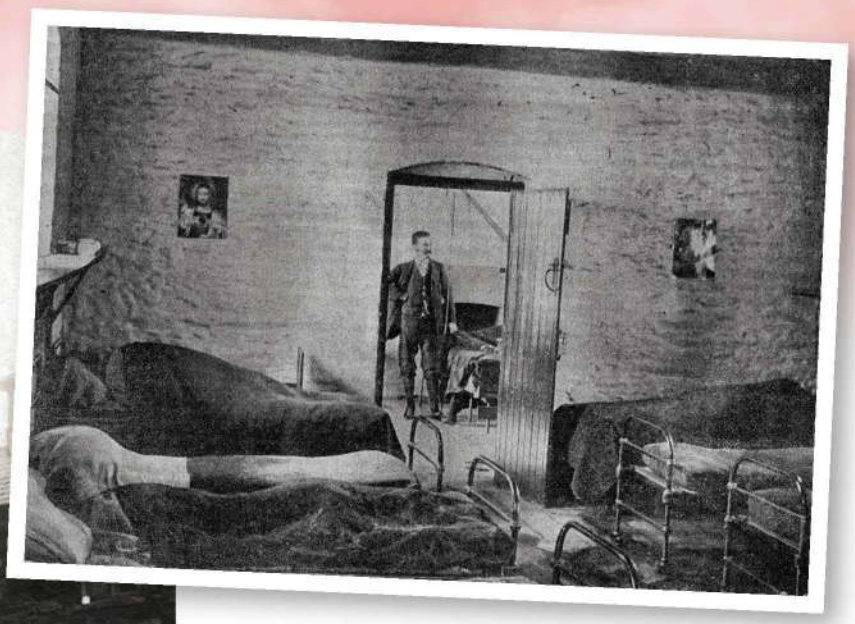


FACING THE LAW, 1910

▼ On 14 December 1910, several hundred men at Belmont Workhouse in Sutton, Surrey, collectively refused to eat the watery porridge they had been served for supper. At 8pm, the regulation bedtime, the men remained in their seats and the police were called, only to be pelted with cutlery and plates as the inmates stood their ground. More than 80 men were eventually arrested, appearing in court the next day. Two were committed for trial, five were discharged, and several others sentenced to three months' hard labour.







IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH, c1895

▲ Although many workhouses were run efficiently, others failed in their care of inmates. In 1895, the year this picture was taken, the infirmary at Cootehill Workhouse in County Cavan, Ireland, was investigated by representatives from the *British Medical Journal*. Their report found the infirmary to be unsanitary and unfit for purpose, and proposed the workhouse be shut down. This image of the workhouse infirmary shows the basic conditions experienced by sick inmates.

DESPERATE MEASURES, c1909

◀ Belfast Union Workhouse – the exterior of the women's dormitory is shown here – opened in 1841 with a maximum capacity of 1,000 inmates. It was expanded significantly during the Great Famine of the 1840s, however, with sheds and sleeping galleries constructed to house the 747 additional inmates forced to enter its doors in search of food and shelter.

A QUIET MEAL, c1901

▶ Row upon row of men sit in silence as they eat a meal in the dining hall at St Marylebone Workhouse, London. Around the time this image was taken, an official workhouse cookery book had been compiled by the National Training School of Cookery. The book featured around 50 dishes – including bread pudding, fish pie, pasties and dumplings – and allowed workhouses to create their own weekly menus to a uniform standard.

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X2, TOPFOTO X1, MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY X1

ON THE ROCKS, c1905

▲ From 1882, workhouses were provided with a list of jobs that inmates were expected to perform. One of these was stone crushing: back-breaking work for men that involved pounding stones with a heavy iron bar until the broken pieces were small enough to pass through the holes in a metal grille – such as those seen on the left of this photograph taken at Pontefract Workhouse.

NIMBLE FINGERS, c1906

◀ Another common task given to inmates was oakum picking – demonstrated here by four women at an unknown workhouse in Scotland. The tedious work, which left fingers black and bleeding, involved teasing out strands of fibre from long lengths of rope, which could then be sold back to shipbuilding yards for further use. ⊙

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

WHAT IF... CHARLES II OF SPAIN HAD PRODUCED AN HEIR?

Nige Tassell and **Dr Adrian Pearce** discuss how history may have been different had the king not named a young French duke as his successor

When Charles II of Spain died in 1700, his infertility – "he had a single testicle," his autopsy reported, "black as coal" – left no heir to the throne. A dispute between the great nations of Europe then ensued. Charles had named the teenage Philip of Anjou as his successor, handing the crown to the House of Bourbon and strengthening the bonds between Spain and France. Such closer ties were met with deep concern in other quarters of Europe – in particular Britain, the Dutch Republic and the Holy Roman Empire – where the preferred choice was Charles III of Austria. This Grand Alliance aimed to maintain Europe's delicate balance of power and reduce French influence on the Iberian Peninsula. The dispute mutated into the War of the Spanish Succession, a 13-year conflict that fractured the continent.

"Had Charles had a child," says Dr Adrian Pearce, associate professor in the School of European Languages, Culture and Society at University College London, "this war would not, of course, have taken place. It was Charles's will that threatened the existing European balance of power by placing a scion of the French ruling dynasty on the throne of Spain." The Grand Alliance could not have been blamed for going to war. "The concerns in Britain and elsewhere regarding a natural Franco-Spanish alliance were not entirely unjustified."

Just as the war wouldn't have taken place had Charles produced an heir, nor of course would the terms of the peace agreement at the end of the conflict. When the fighting stopped, Philip was confirmed as king of Spain, although – for the sake of that balance of power – he had to renounce his right, or that of his descendants, to inherit the French throne. While Spanish territory in Italy and the Low Countries was ceded, its colonies across the Atlantic were largely left intact, although significant trade concessions were made in the Spanish Americas to the British, who were the key winners in the war's aftermath, becoming the dominant maritime power, usurping the Dutch who'd been run aground by debts from the war.

DID YOU KNOW?

UNEXPECTED RETURN

Philip of Anjou (later Philip V) ruled Spain for 44 years, making him the country's longest-serving monarch. But his reign wasn't continuous: in 1724 he abdicated in favour of his son, Louis, only for Louis to die of smallpox and force Philip's return later that year.

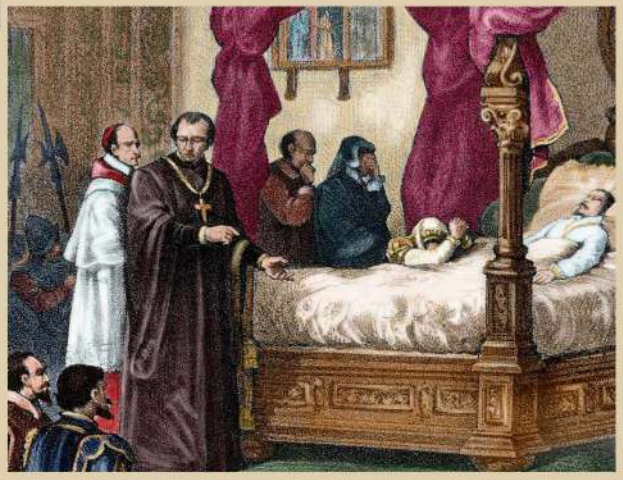
BOURBON REFORMS

Dr Pearce argues that it's not inconceivable this would have happened anyway, just over a longer period of time. "Would Britannia have ended up ruling the waves without the War of the Spanish Succession? That is, was Britain's naval power on the rise anyway and the aftermath of the war simply fuelled the inevitable? The latter seems likely to have been the case: the War of Succession acted as a catalyst and speeded up processes that were already in play. The 18th century was likely to have become increasingly 'British' over time, helped by the onset of the Industrial Revolution. It was just that the conflict in and over Spain brought Britain's strength to the fore." British domination of the slave trade, aided by the award of exclusive rights to supply the Spanish colonies with slaves after the war, would have been a likely outcome, too, in time.

The inheritance of Spanish power by the House of Bourbon brought great changes within Spain which, under the underwhelming Habsburg rule, had not been on the horizon. "The Spanish Habsburgs had long defaulted to conservatism and an antipathy to innovation in government. There is little reason to believe this would change after 1700. The Spanish national revival came about precisely because of the stimulus of a new dynasty bringing new

IN CONTEXT

On 1 November 1700, five days before his 39th birthday, Charles II of Spain died where he was born, in the Royal Alcázar of Madrid. Despite being twice married, the king failed to produce an heir to the crown, his infertility linked to serial inbreeding within the House of Habsburg. In the last weeks of his life, he had been persuaded to name the 16-year-old Philip of Anjou, the grandson of his elder sister and, most notably, Louis XIV of France, as his successor. This put the House of Bourbon on the Spanish throne, a move that precipitated the War of the Spanish Succession and significantly diverted the course of European history.



Charles II of Spain had been in poor health for most of his life, with many of his ailments linked to generations of inbreeding within the House of Habsburg

GETTY IMAGES X3

ABOVE LEFT: **An illustration depicts Louis XIV of France (*second from left*) proclaiming his grandson, Philip of Anjou (*far left*), king of Spain**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The battle of Blenheim, fought in Bavaria in 1704, was one of the largest clashes of the subsequent War of the Spanish Succession**

ideas and new attitudes to government. Moreover, the War of Succession itself brought the abolition of the *fueros*, the traditional rights and privileges of the Crown of Aragon, a key landmark in the formation of Spain itself as a modern nation state."

The colonies in Spanish America also felt this wave of modernisation, which they almost certainly wouldn't have had under the Habsburgs. "The Americas too were subject to their own Bourbon reforms," explains Dr Pearce, "in a process that came to affect the economy, the state finances, matters of defence, church-state relations and the structures of government. The 18th century in the Hispanic world definitely has a different feel to it."

With Britain empowered and Spain under a process of modernisation, what effect did the war have on France? Britain had weakened the French hold over the eastern coast of present-day Canada, including the conquering of Newfoundland and the renaming of French Acadia as Nova Scotia. Had there been no war, perhaps French influence would have spread westwards, offering the possibility of Canada being a wholly French-speaking nation today.

"THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION ACTED AS A CATALYST AND SPEEDED UP PROCESSES THAT WERE ALREADY IN PLAY"

A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT

It could also be argued that the war – itself, of course, precipitated by that lack of a Spanish heir – sowed the seeds of a fundamental shift for France domestically. The nation had encountered huge debts from 13 years of conflict, with its monarchy being seen by the populace as over-powerful and out of touch as a result. A case can thus be made that these were the initial stirrings which gathered weight and momentum over the subsequent decades, culminating in the French Revolution. That is, without the financial aftermath of the War of the Spanish Succession, the move towards republicanism wouldn't have been so soon, if at all.

GET HOOKED

READ
Professor Martyn Rady writes about the surprising longevity of the Habsburg dynasty on the *HistoryExtra* website: *historyextra.com/habsburg-dynasty*

NEXT MONTH
What if the Continental Army hadn't escaped after the battle of Long Island?

Try 3 issues for £5*

Subscribe to *BBC History Magazine* and explore the historical background to the world of today

Subscribe to Britain's bestselling history magazine

BEAUTIFUL BOOKS, BEAUTIFUL GIFTS
HISTORY
Tudors in Revolt
How the Prayer Book Rebellion plunged England into chaos
The black Victorians who forged modern Britain
TUDOR QUEENS OF BLING
HISTORY
TUTANKHAMUN'S REIGN OF TERROR
Who really discovered the boy king's tomb?
EYEWITNESS TO STALINGRAD
HISTORY
Henry V's fatal legacy
The enduring trauma of partition

GETTY IMAGES

Your special introductory offer:

- Receive your first **3 issues for only £5**
- All subscribers get **FREE** access to **HistoryExtra.com**
- **Risk free trial offer** – you may cancel your subscription at any time.
- **Free UK delivery** direct to your door, at no extra charge!
- **Never miss an issue** of Britain's best-selling history magazine

* Offer open to new UK customers subscribing to the print edition only. Full details of the Direct Debit Guarantee are available on request. After your first 3 issues, your subscription will continue at £24.99 every 6 issues, saving 36% off the shop price thereafter. We reserve the right to reject or cancel subscriptions at any point if the customer has previously cancelled their subscription during the trial period for that magazine or any other magazine in the Immediate Media portfolio. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Your HistoryExtra.com access will continue to be free as part of your magazine subscription and will come to an end if you decide to cancel your print subscription at any time.
Offer ends 31st December 2023.

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances if offered by your phone tariff. Outside of free call packages calls charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open 9am–5pm weekdays. Overseas readers call +44 1604 973 723

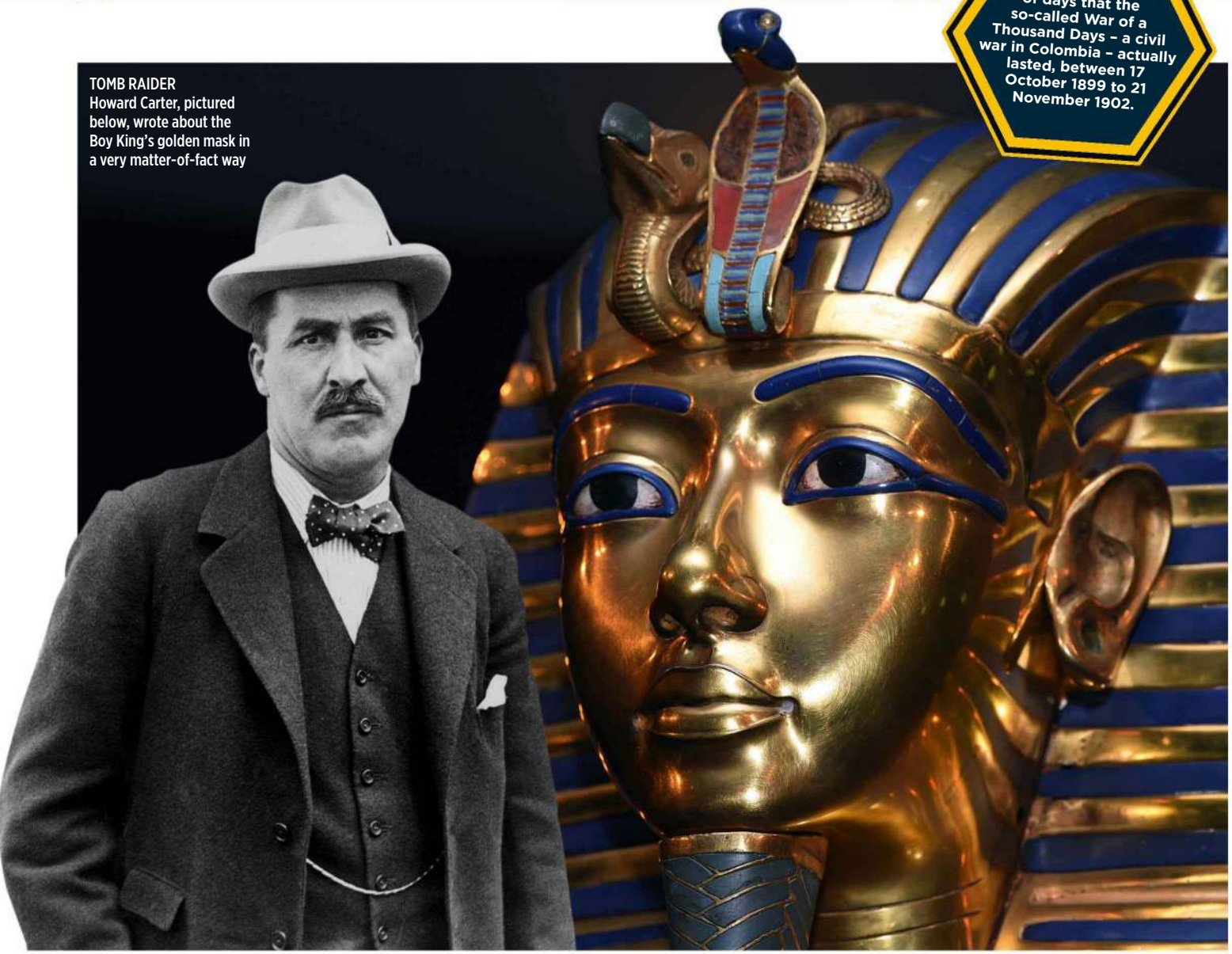
SCAN THIS TO ORDER NOW

or VISIT **www.buysubscriptions.com/HTHA23**

or CALL **03330 162 115**+ quoting HTHA23

1,130

The number of days that the so-called War of a Thousand Days – a civil war in Colombia – actually lasted, between 17 October 1899 to 21 November 1902.



TOMB RAIDER
Howard Carter, pictured below, wrote about the Boy King's golden mask in a very matter-of-fact way

What was Howard Carter's reaction to Tutankhamun's mask?

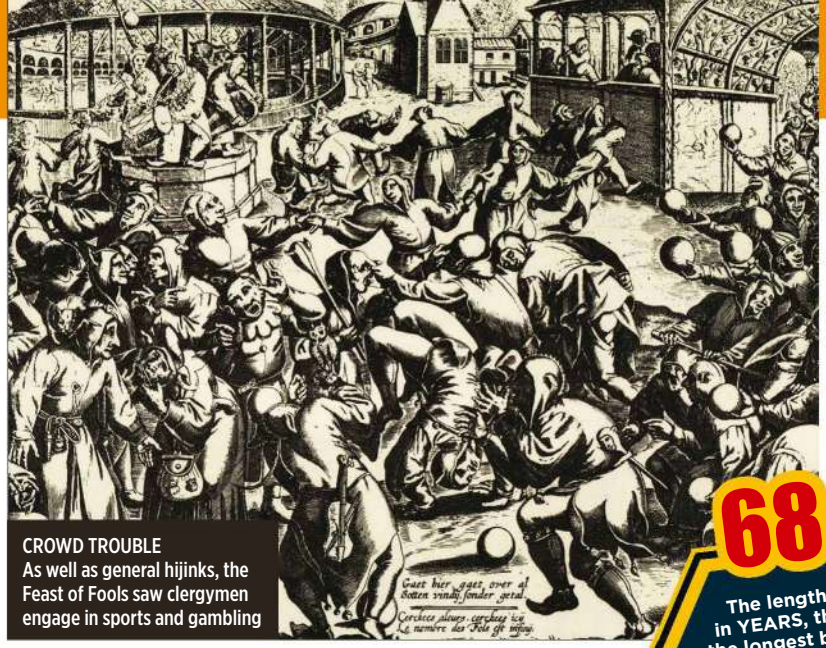
SHORT ANSWER Going by his journal entry, you wouldn't know he had just found one of history's greatest treasures

LONG ANSWER In between the 1922 discovery of the tomb (breaching the doorway, seeing "wonderful things" and all that) and Tutankhamun's golden death mask becoming a ubiquitous symbol of ancient Egypt known the world over, Howard Carter had to quickly come to terms with the enormity of the project before him of sorting the thousands of unearthed wonders. The British archaeologist went about it in methodical manner, slowly removing each item and taking comprehensive notes and photographs.

It wouldn't be until 28 October 1925 that Carter and his team opened Tutankhamun's sarcophagus and three coffins – a "very difficult and tedious operation", he wrote – to reveal the mask. After nearly three years, he was well accustomed to recording everything in his journal with matter-of-fact detail, so even at this moment there was little emotion: "A very neatly wrapped mummy of the young king, with golden mask of sad but tranquil expression, symbolising Osiris."

That said, he did add a line, before further describing the "beautifully wrought" mask with its "juvenile countenance", to suggest he was aware of the significance of this artefact, above all others. "The similitude of youthful Tut.Ankh. Amen, until now known only by name, amid that sepulchral silence, made us realise the past."

GETTY IMAGES X2



CROWD TROUBLE
As well as general hijinks, the Feast of Fools saw clergymen engage in sports and gambling

What did the Feast of Fools celebrate?

SHORT ANSWER It was either a solemn reminder of God's love of all people, or an excuse to add a little anarchy

LONG ANSWER The Feast of Fools, held on 1 January in medieval France, was a chance for the clergy to let their hair down, within reason. The custom was to let low-ranking members of the church, like choirboys, assume the positions of priests and bishops for the day, serving as a reminder that God loved the humble, or 'fools'.

Outside the churches, however, the feast day became a time of subverting social norms, and could be quite rowdy affairs. There would be parades and costumes – or men dressed as women and vice versa – accompanied with lots of singing, dancing, drinking and gambling. At the heart of it would be a chance to mock church formality, so the notion sprang up of electing false popes during the merrymaking.

This didn't sit too well with church authorities, which tried many times to stop the Feast of Fools. But even when it was banned by the Council of Basel in the 1430s, the tradition persisted until the 16th century.

68

The length, in YEARS, that the longest bout of hiccups lasted. Between 1922 and 1990, American Charles Osborne hiccupped an estimated 430 million times.

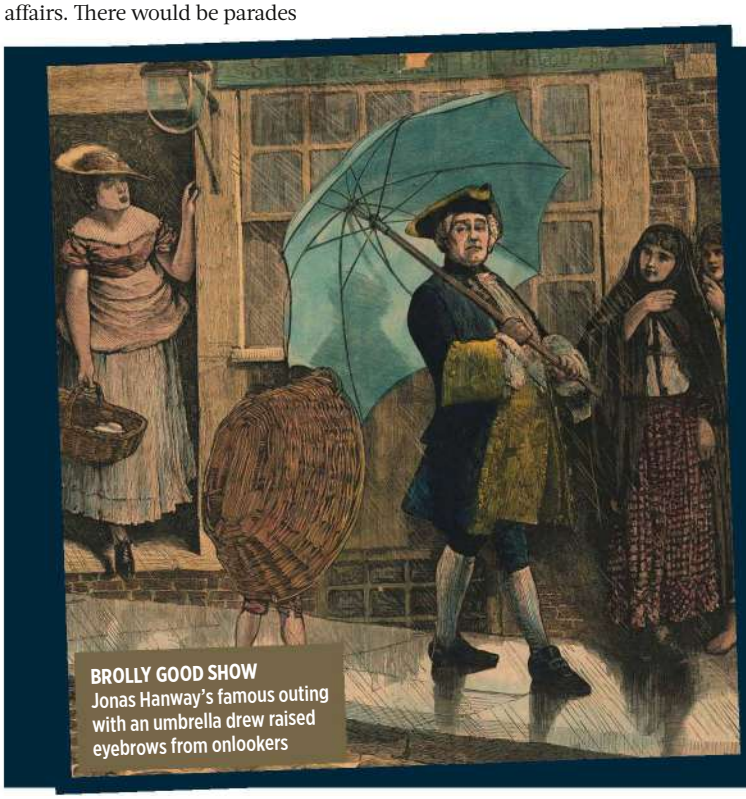
Is there really a bishop of the Moon?

SHORT ANSWER Yes: Apollo 11 helped the Catholic Church reach the heavens

LONG ANSWER If an expedition discovers new land, it immediately falls under the remit of the diocese where that expedition left from. So states a rule laid out in the 1917 Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church, which was in effect until 1983 and unexpectedly became an intriguing talking point in 1969.

For according to this rule, when American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped on the lunar surface, the Moon became part of the Diocese of Orlando, Florida – home to Cape Canaveral, where Apollo 11 launched. The bishop at the time, William Donald Borders, was quick to take on the title of 'bishop of the Moon', and even introduced himself as such, tongue firmly in cheek, in a later meeting with the pope.

LUNAR MISSION
1969 was an important year for the Catholic Church, as well as Nasa



BROLLY GOOD SHOW
Jonas Hanway's famous outing with an umbrella drew raised eyebrows from onlookers

When was the umbrella introduced in Britain?

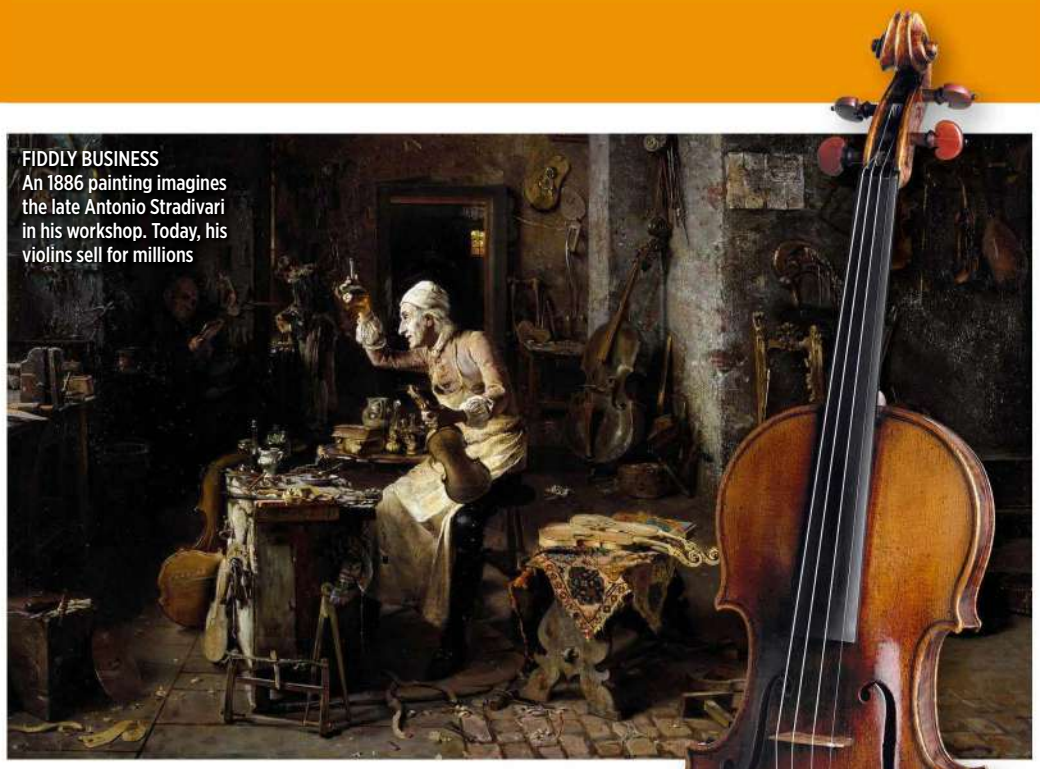
SHORT ANSWER It took millennia for the brolly to come to the rain-soaked isle, and longer to get into men's hands

LONG ANSWER Given that the umbrella has its origins in antiquity, and Britain gets more than its fair share of rain, the 17th century seems rather late for the invention to have made its first appearance on these shores – and even then, it was a strictly women-only accessory.

In fact, when, in the mid-18th century, the eccentric philanthropist Jonas Hanway took a walk through London sporting an umbrella, he received a torrent of abuse from passers-by. Especially irked were hansom cab drivers, since they had a booming trade from men on rainy days.

The device was seen as a sign of weakness for a man, and far too associated with England's enemy, France. Yet, after Hanway's daring walk, public opinion did begin to shift. So, as well as founding the Marine Society and London's Magdalen Hospital, he deserves to be remembered for helping keep the top of men's heads dry.

GETTY IMAGES X7, ALAMY X2



FIDDLY BUSINESS
An 1886 painting imagines the late Antonio Stradivari in his workshop. Today, his violins sell for millions

Why are Stradivarius violins so famous?

SHORT ANSWER Their undeniable mystique went from wowing royals to selling for millions

LONG ANSWER The Italian Antonio Stradivari holds a special place in the history of music as the finest-ever maker of violins. By the time of his death in 1737, he had crafted around 1,000 in his Cremona workshop (assisted in his later years by his sons Francesco and Ombono).

There are many reasons and theories why a Stradivarius was regarded as superior, earning commissions from James II of England and Charles III of Spain. Stradivari experimented with the size and shape to a miniscule degree; elongated the 'f' holes in the front to produce more sound; and possibly concocted a new varnish that added richness. Even nature was on his side, it seemed: colder temperatures at the time meant trees grew slower, which made for slightly denser wood.

In the first decades of the 18th century, Stradivari enjoyed a 'golden period' of producing his finest, most exquisitely decorated violins, which now sell for astronomical sums. There's the *Dolphin* (made in 1714, now valued at $6m), *Lady Blunt* (1721, nearly $16m) and the *Messiah* (1716, $20m). Sadly enough, his masterpieces are so valuable that they are rarely played, so their value now lies in the Stradivarius mystique, history and reputation more than the quality of sound.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE NAKED GUN

In an 1806 duel against the Earl of Barrymore, the MP Humphrey Howarth asked if he could strip to his underpants to prevent his wounds from being infected by his clothing. The earl, not wishing to face a semi-naked man, withdrew.

ROAMIN' RABBITS

One of Roman Britain's largest amphitheatres was built at Corinium (Cirencester) in the second century AD. A millennium later, the abbot of the town enclosed the long-abandoned remains to create a huge rabbit warren.

(WRONG) HILL TO DIE ON

The battle of Bunker's Hill, on 17 June 1775, is one of the most famous engagements of the American Revolutionary War, but it is arguably misnamed. Most of the fighting actually took place on the neighbouring Breed's Hill.

DRINK RESPONSIBLY

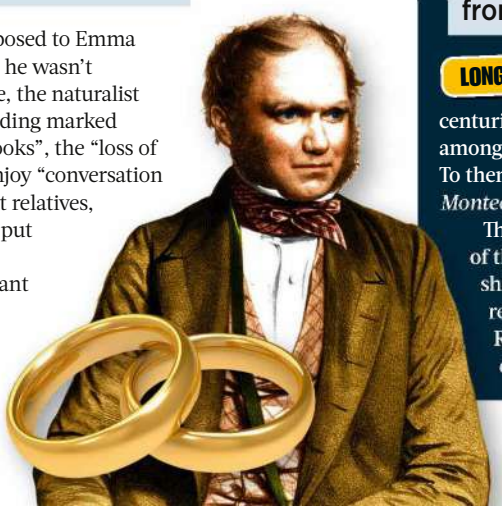
To tackle what was seen as excessive consumption of alcohol, the French government of the 1950s launched its Santé Sobriété ('Health Sobriety') campaign. Its posters recommended cutting down to "No more than a litre of wine a day".

What were Charles Darwin's pros and cons of marriage?

SHORT ANSWER The father of evolutionary theory struggled to make his (natural) selection

LONG ANSWER Before Charles Darwin proposed to Emma Wedgwood, his first cousin, he wasn't convinced marriage was right for him. Therefore, the naturalist wrote down a list of pros and cons. Under a heading marked "Not Marry", he talked about "less money for books", the "loss of time" – with which he could instead travel or enjoy "conversation of clever men at clubs" – and not having to "visit relatives, & bend in every trifle". Under "Marry", Darwin put forward "charms of music & female chit-chat", "children (if it please God)" and having a "constant companion... better than a dog anyhow".

Luckily for him, the latter won out and the happy couple were married from early 1839 until his death in 1882.



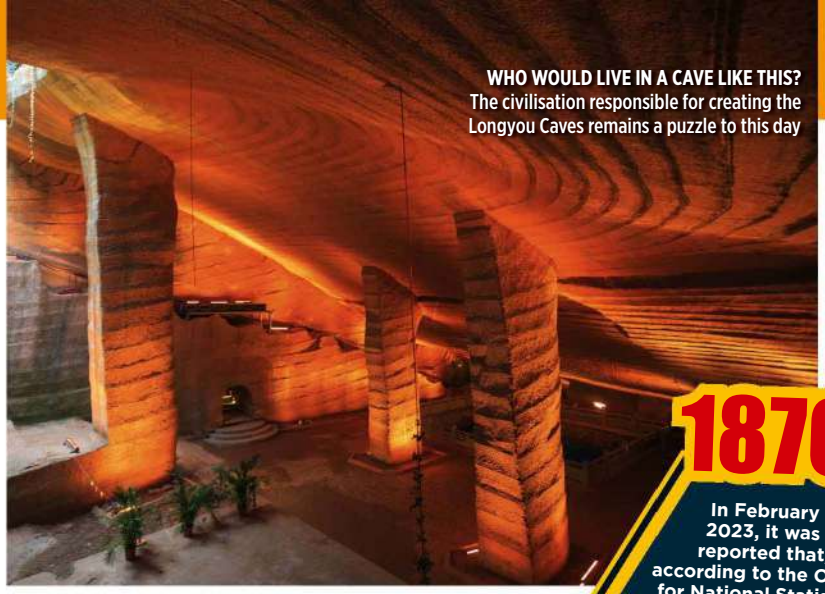
MARRIAGE WOES
Darwin feared that having a wife would be a waste of time

Are Panama hats from Panama?

SHORT ANSWER The headgear comes from a different country in the Americas

LONG ANSWER To this day, the manufacture of the iconic Panama hat is rooted in a centuries-old straw-weaving tradition. That skill is not among Panamanians, though, but the people of Ecuador. To them, the hat is more likely called a *jipijapa*, *toquilla* or *Montecristi* (after the town where the best ones are made).

The name emerged in the 19th century when crates of the hats went to the Isthmus of Panama before being shipped around the world. The 'Panama hat' label then really stuck when, in 1906, US president Theodore Roosevelt visited the Panama Canal while under construction and was photographed wearing one.



WHO WOULD LIVE IN A CAVE LIKE THIS?
The civilisation responsible for creating the Longyou Caves remains a puzzle to this day

1876

In February 2023, it was reported that, according to the Office for National Statistics, the last time that houses in Britain were as unaffordable as they are now was in 1876.

Who built the Longyou Caves?

SHORT ANSWER Who made the cathedral-like caverns is one part of the mystery. We also don't know how or why

LONG ANSWER In June 1992, a farmer in Zhejiang province, China, drained some small ponds in his village – except, they weren't ponds; they were long-lost human-made caverns. The resulting search revealed a total of 24 carved out of the sandstone of Fenghuang Hill. They weren't small either, reaching 1,000 square metres and heights of 20–30 metres thanks to supporting pillars.

Exploration of the Longyou Caves just added to the wonder: they were made with remarkable symmetry, decorated floor to ceiling with precise parallel lines, and suffered no substantial damage over 2,000 years. The most fascinating detail, however, was how few clues there were to who built them, how or what for.

There are zero records of such construction – despite being big enough to suggest a leader's involvement, if not an emperor – and archaeologists have not even found evidence of tools, habitation or what happened to all the removed stone. To date, the mysteries of the Longyou Caves remain nowhere near to being solved.

What was a scold's bridle?

SHORT ANSWER One of the many cruel ways of punishing women for being women

LONG ANSWER For centuries, the crime of being a 'scold' meant to disturb the peace, argue with neighbours, spread gossip, and generally be rude or inappropriate. More likely, it was a term levelled to silence women. Among the punishments that could be handed out, seen in England, Scotland and parts of northern Europe and the Americas from the 16th century, was the scold's bridle.

This was an iron mask or muzzle with a bar that went through the mouth, which could have spikes on it to ensure it was impossible to talk (or eat) without severe pain. The scold could then be paraded for extra public humiliation. The crime of being a scold was eventually abolished – but not until 1967. Thankfully, the bridle was long out of use by then.

A WOMAN SCORNED
The scold's bridle was designed to humiliate its (mostly female) wearers

TAKEN TOO SOON
A 19th-century image depicts the alleged murder of Edward V alongside his brother. The king's reign was even shorter than that of the next Edward (*below right*)

Why was he Edward the SIXTH, not fifth?

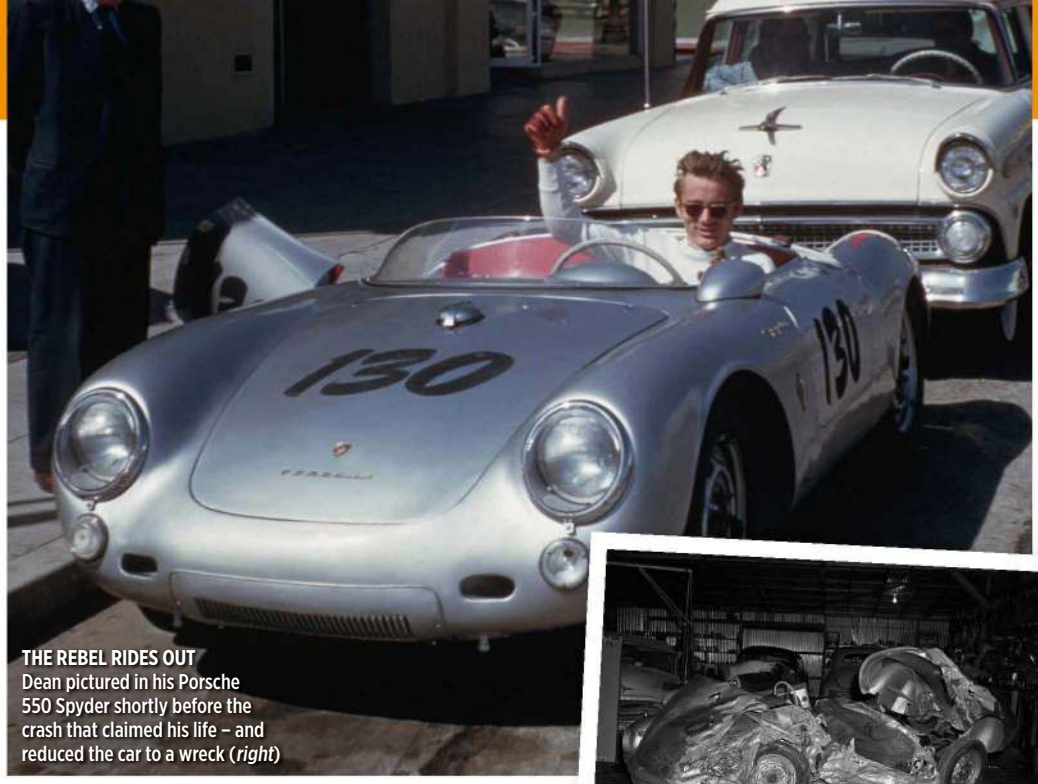
SHORT ANSWER The missing Edward V may not have been crowned, but he was still a king with a number

LONG ANSWER When the much-desired son of Henry VIII became king in 1547, he was crowned as Edward VI – despite the lack of coronation for a preceding Edward V. Yet that king did exist: he was one of the Princes in the Tower to have vanished sometime in 1483 while under the care of their uncle, who then took the throne for himself as Richard III.

The missing Edward may never have been crowned, but he was still king for the short spell between his father's death and his disappearance. So when it comes to the royal timeline, there's no question that he deserved the 'V' in Edward V.

When it came to naming his own son, Henry VIII may just have chosen Edward as a nod to this lost king. Not only was his mother the sister of the Princes in the Tower, but it was his family, the Tudors, who had defeated Richard III at Bosworth in 1485.

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X1, ZHANGZHUGANG X1, BEN PAULOS X1



THE REBEL RIDES OUT
Dean pictured in his Porsche 550 Spyder shortly before the crash that claimed his life – and reduced the car to a wreck (*right*)

Why is it said that James Dean's car was cursed?

SHORT ANSWER The film star was just the first victim of his spookily malfunctioning car. Apparently...

LONG ANSWER The year 1955 was when James Dean's acting career took off with his acclaimed performance in *East of Eden*, only to be snuffed out with his shocking death at the age of 24. For he was also passionate about fast cars and an aspiring racer. On 30 September 1955, Dean was driving his new Porsche 550 Spyder to a race in Salinas, California, when he had a collision with a car that turned in front of him.

Dean died at the scene, and the news made him an instant icon (his other movies *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Giant* were released later that year, cementing his place as poster boy of 1950s teen culture). Soon, stories were swirling about a curse. The crumpled Spyder, dubbed 'Little Bastard', was salvaged and its parts put in other cars, but these started being involved in their own crashes. Even the chassis injured people after falling off its display while being toured by the LA National Safety Council.

While talk of a curse was most likely the attention-grabbing work of the mangled car's owner, there is a spooky coda to the story. A week before the crash, Dean had been showing off Little Bastard to fellow actor Alec Guinness, who came out with the ominous warning, "Please never get in it. If you get in that car, you will be found dead in it by this time next week."

What happened to German helmets after WWII?

SHORT ANSWER If you thought they resembled upturned pots and pans, you're not far wrong

LONG ANSWER After World War II, colossal clean-up operations had to be completed if Europe was to recover. One particular item with a sudden and unwanted surplus was the Stahlhelm, the steel helmets worn by troops of the German Army. While a handful were taken home by Allied soldiers as souvenirs, there were still millions to dispose of. The solution was to recycle them into items such as pots, pans and colanders. Indeed, a British Pathé film from 1946 shows piles of helmets being reshaped and recut, before being enamelled.

POT TO GOOD USE
These Stahlhelm helmets have been converted into a chamber pot (*left*) and a colander (*right*)

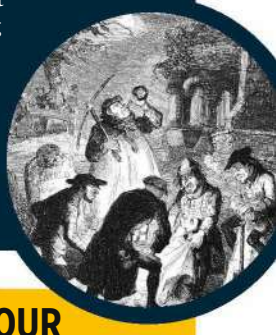
What was a 'coffin torpedo'?

SHORT ANSWER During a bodysnatching epidemic, resting in peace wasn't always restful or peaceful

LONG ANSWER With grave robbing a major problem in the later 19th century – to satisfy growing demand for bodies at medical schools – methods had to be devised to protect the dead. Coffins were encased in metal cages and bodies secured with heavy-duty collars, but for those wanting to take the fight to the bodysnatchers, there was the 'coffin torpedo'.

Phil Clover of Ohio patented his design in 1878 of essentially a shotgun under the coffin lid primed to go off if opened. A few years later, fellow Ohio inventor Thomas Howell promoted his own version, which was more like a mine buried above the deceased. "Sleep well sweet angel, let no fears of ghouls disturb thy rest, for above thy shrouded form lies a torpedo, ready to make minced meat of anyone who attempts to convey you to the pickling vat," read one of the advertisements.

Luckily, it doesn't seem many coffin torpedoes were manufactured, let alone still lurking underground.



GRAVE SITUATION
Cemeteries were raided by felons hoping to make a quick buck

SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS

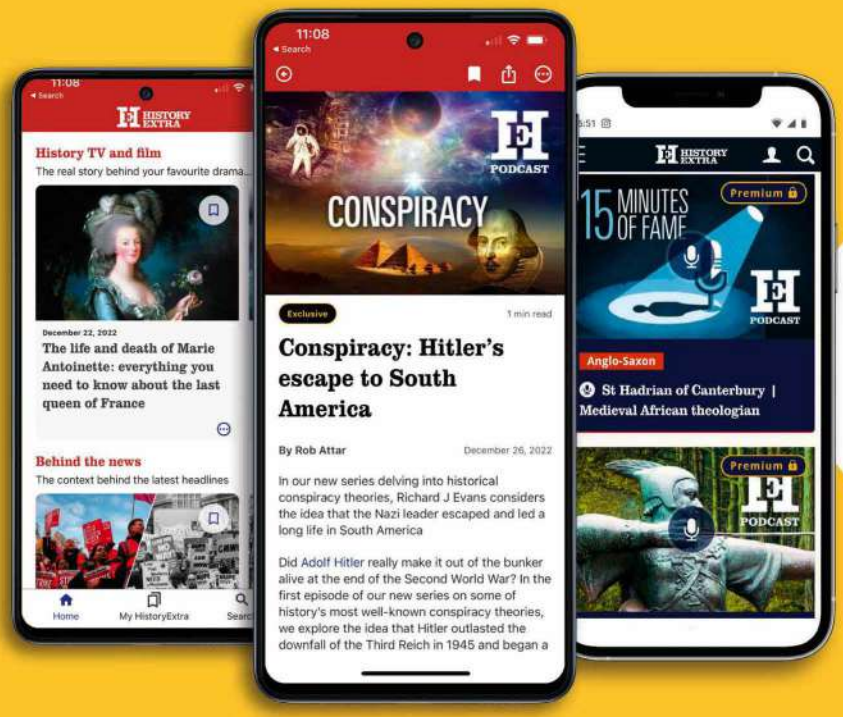
facebook.com/HistoryExtra
twitter.com/HistoryExtra
@HistoryExtra

MORE Q&A ONLINE

Visit ***historyextra.com*** for more astounding history mysteries.

HISTORY EXTRA

Unlock the past anytime, anywhere with the new HistoryExtra app


History TV and film
The real story behind your favourite drama...
The life and death of Marie Antoinette: everything you need to know about the last queen of France
Behind the news
The context behind the latest headlines
CONSPIRACY
PODCAST
Exclusive
1 min read
Conspiracy: Hitler's escape to South America
By Rob Attar
December 26, 2022
In our new series delving into historical conspiracy theories, Richard J Evans considers the idea that the Nazi leader escaped and led a long life in South America
Did Adolf Hitler really make it out of the bunker alive at the end of the Second World War? In the first episode of our new series on some of history's most well-known conspiracy theories, we explore the idea that Hitler outlasted the downfall of the Third Reich in 1945 and began a
15 MINUTES OF FAME
Premium
Anglo-Saxon
St Hadrian of Canterbury | Medieval African theologian

Unlock FREE PREMIUM APP ACCESS* as part of your print subscription – **worth £34.99/year**

Discover expertly written articles, ad-free podcasts and masterclass videos right at the end of your fingertips

Our easy-to-use app allows you to:

- **Bookmark** your favourite articles to read later
- Use our **dark mode** functionality, perfect for low-light reading
- Discover the **search tool** to learn more about the topics you love

DOWNLOAD NOW

GET IT ON Google play

Download on the App Store

*** Instructions** on unlocking your access can be found at **historyextra.com/the-historyextra-app/**

ONE TO WATCH

Twin medical doctors Chris and Xand van Tulleken (*main*) and actor Claire Foy (*below right*) are among the latest celebrities to receive the *Who Do You Think You Are?* treatment

Family lines

Who Do You Think You Are? / BBC One, June

The familiar format of *WDYTYA?* is deceptively straightforward. In each episode, a celebrity, assisted by genealogists and historians, traces family stories. Accounts of personal heroism and overcoming huge odds rub shoulders with tales of criminality and bankruptcy.

You could of course suggest that any research into family history, where the number of great-grandparents doubles with every generation, is bound to reveal interesting stories. And yet such scepticism is to undervalue the sheer sophistication and depth of the research that goes into the show.

It also doesn't explain the power of the most memorable episodes, those where the show's subject is visibly moved or shocked by what's revealed. Or reaches a deeper understanding of someone close to them, a parent or grandparent. Think of Danny Dyer's delight in discovering royal connections or, less happily, how Sir Patrick Stewart gained insights into his violent father's PTSD.

But whatever the reasons for its success, *WDYTYA?* has now reached its 20th series, and the list of those taking part is as impressive as ever, not least because the series kicks off with a superstar of musical theatre, Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber. The composer behind such blockbusters as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita* and *The Phantom of the Opera* goes in search of showbiz connections and, in the 18th century, finds them.

Other episodes this time around feature actors Claire Foy and Lesley Manville, the adventurer and survival expert Bear Grylls, *Strictly* dancer Kevin Clifton, twin medical doctors and science broadcasters Chris and Xand van Tulleken, comedians Emily Atack and Chris Ramsey, and the DJ Dev Griffin.

Among the highlights, Claire Foy, star of *The Crown*, discovers how her family were caught up in a politically charged murder trial, while Emily Atack, who is related to Paul McCartney, also learns about a family link to Wrexham AFC, lately in the news because of the Welsh club's Hollywood connections.

WEEKLY TV & RADIO
Visit *historyextra.com* for updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes

MULTITUDE MEDIA X2

Pressure groups, such as Rank Outsiders, spent years campaigning against the ban on LGBTQ people serving in the British armed forces

Afua Hirsch's new BBC series sees her exploring the contrasting cultures found in Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa

New narratives

Africa Rising with Afua Hirsch / BBC Two, mid-June

How should we tell stories of Africa? How do we move beyond narratives of the colonial era into the present? How do we present nuance and avoid the trap of seeing Africa, a vast continent, as somehow akin to a big country rather than a place of distinct and vibrant cultures?

One approach is to go to different nations and report, which is precisely what Afua Hirsch does in a new series that can be seen as a follow-up to her 2020 offering *African Renaissance: When Art Meets Power*, where she explored the histories of Ethiopia, Senegal and Kenya through art, music and culture.

This time around, the writer and broadcaster travels to three of the continent's biggest countries, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa. Her brief this time around is to meet young creatives living in these nations and to portray African countries, as the advance publicity puts it, on their own terms. This is ultimately an art series, but one where cultural history is never far from view.

In Morocco, for example, she goes riding with a *tbourida* rider, Amal Amhari, an expert in a form of equestrianism that has traditionally been the domain of men. But no longer. It's an encounter that helps show how Moroccans are updating their traditions.

In Nigeria, Hirsch goes looking for the roots of the creative dynamism that drives the continent's largest economy. In South Africa, a key theme is *ekasi*, slang for both 'my community' and 'my soul'. Can stories rooted in township culture help bring the wider nation together?

Hirsch's adventures take her to a traditional *tbourida* equestrian event in Morocco

Fighting to serve

Forced Out / Sky Documentaries, June

As recently as 2000, LGBTQ people were unable to serve openly in the armed forces. However, thanks in great part to the efforts of Stonewall, who spearheaded the movement to overturn the ban on homosexuality in the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, recruiters now fetch up at LGBTQ pride events.

While this level of progress is to be warmly welcomed, the fact remains that in the past many were dishonourably discharged because of their sexuality. Thousands also found themselves facing intrusive investigations at the hands of the military police, sometimes a prelude to imprisonment. Others even ended up losing their service pensions and medals.

Timed to coincide with the publication of *LGBT Veterans Independent Review*, a new report into the experiences of gay people who served between 1967 and 2000, *Forced Out* tells the story of the battle to overturn the ban.

MAIN: Jamaican arrivals John Hazel, Harold Wilmot and John Richards (*left to right*) pictured on board *Empire Windrush* in 1948

RIGHT: The arrival of the troopship – and the subsequent fortunes of its passengers – is the focus of a new BBC Radio 4 series

Young, gifted and black

Chevalier / In cinemas from Friday 9 June

MAIN: **Kelvin Harrison Jr plays the talented violinist, composer and swordsmith Joseph Bologne in upcoming biopic *Chevalier***

RIGHT: **The cast also includes the likes of Samara Weaving and Alex Fitzalan, pictured here alongside Harrison Jr**

It's a measure of how highly Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–99) was regarded in the late 18th century that John Adams once called him "the most accomplished man in Europe". The diplomat and future second president of the United States wasn't alone in his admiration. A conductor and composer, socialite and soldier who was also a champion fencer, Chevalier cut quite the figure in French society.

That's even more remarkable when you consider that, in a time of overt racism, Chevalier, born in Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, was the son of a French plantation owner and an enslaved black woman. So how did a man dubbed the "Black Mozart" – although Bill Barclay, former director of music at Shakespeare's Globe, once argued you could as easily call Mozart the "White Chevalier" – come to find such success against the odds?

It's a story explored by director Stephen Williams in a new biopic starring Kelvin Harrison Jr in the lead role. The film relates how Chevalier, whose father sent him to boarding school in France, was favoured by the queen, Marie-Antoinette (Lucy Boynton) after being presented at court, but found his career stymied by both racism and his own ill-starred romantic choices. It also foreshadows how, in later life, Chevalier fought for the republican cause during the French Revolution that took the life of his former patron.

The film arrives at a time when Chevalier's music is being rediscovered by classical music aficionados and found to be just as good as his reputation in the 18th century suggests.

Atlantic crossing

Windrush: A Family Divided / BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds, from Monday 5 June

It's 75 years since the passenger ship HMT *Empire Windrush*, forever emblematic of post-World War II immigration to the UK from the Caribbean, docked at Tilbury in Essex and calypso star Lord Kitchener sang 'London is the Place for Me', as captured by Pathé News. For those who relocated in search of new opportunities, was it 'worth it'? Keyed off by a genuine dispute between married couple Jennifer and Robert, it's a question that lies at the centre of a new four-part series.

Jennifer thinks that, because of broken promises and racism, the Windrush generation would have been better heading back to their original countries and using their skills to help build the economies of these nations. She would like the family to move to Jamaica.

Robert disagrees. While he acknowledges the hardships endured by previous generations, he thinks coming across the Atlantic was ultimately good both for those who made the journey and their descendants. He has no intention of leaving Britain for Jamaica.

Each of the first three episodes looks at the series' central question through the prism of a different facet of life: work and money, health and wellbeing, and identity and culture. The series concludes with a panel discussion chaired by the BBC news anchor and *Mastermind* host, Clive Myrie.

Net gains

Gods of Tennis / BBC Two, June

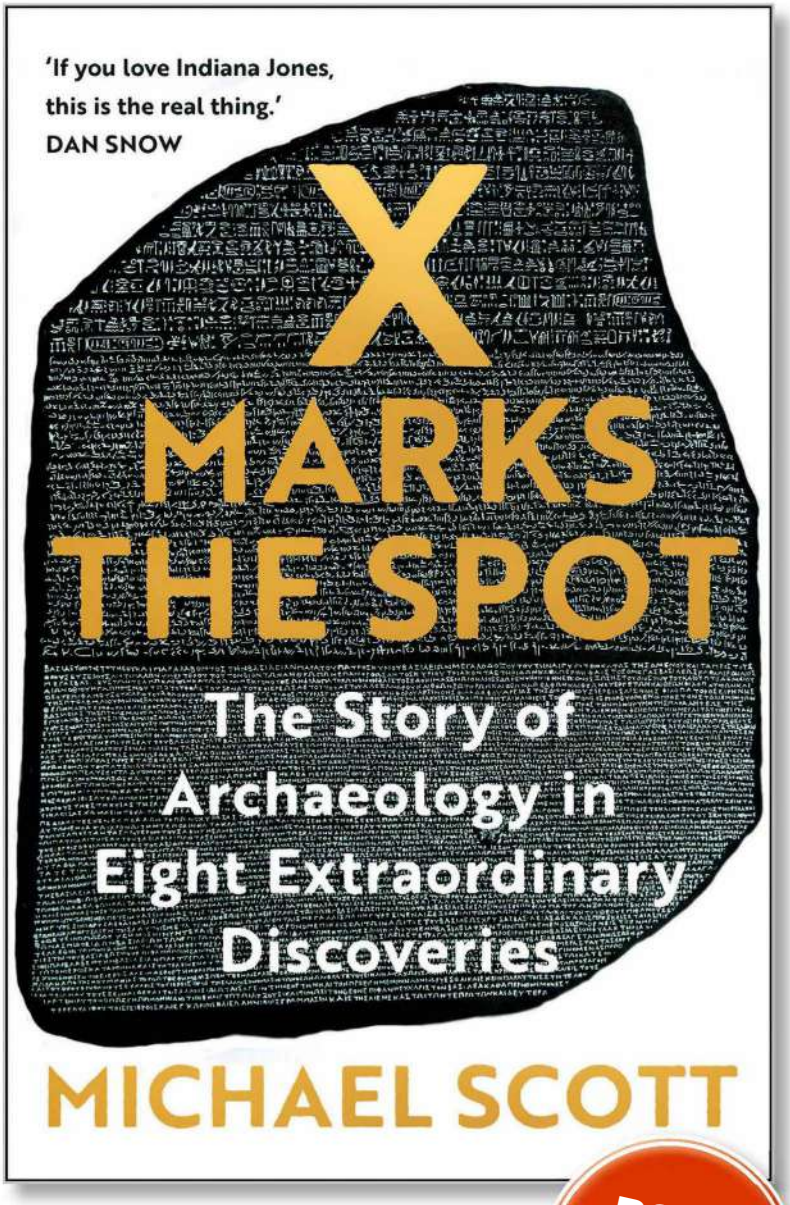
The 1970s and 1980s represented a golden age for tennis, decades when stars such as Martina Navratilova, Björn Borg and Chris Evert enthralled crowds around the world, including at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club's annual strawberries-and-champers jamboree, Wimbledon.

Over three episodes, *Gods of Tennis* looks back not just at the era's sporting rivalries, but at how events on the court so often reflected the politics of years that brought the end of the Cold War, the sexual revolution, and campaigns for racial equality and LGBTQ rights.

BBC/CLEAR STORY/ALEX BRISLAND X1, GETTY IMAGES X3, DRAGONFLY FIL & TV/SKY STUDIOS, 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS X2, BBC X1

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS


'If you love Indiana Jones, this is the real thing.'
DAN SNOW
X MARKS THE SPOT
The Story of Archaeology in Eight Extraordinary Discoveries
MICHAEL SCOTT

BOOK OF THE MONTH

X Marks the Spot: The Story of Archaeology in Eight Extraordinary Discoveries

By Michael Scott
Hodder & Stoughton, £25, hardback, 320 pages

This latest book from historian and broadcaster Michael Scott explores what he describes as the "quintessentially human itch" to learn more about the physical remnants of our past. Focusing on archaeological discoveries made across 200 years – of, for instance, the Terracotta Warriors, Machu Picchu, and the Rosetta Stone – it's a lively journey across centuries and continents. And, by focusing on the individuals who made such remarkable discoveries, Scott also investigates what their aims and motivations tell us about the ways in which we view the past.

Cinderella Boys: The Forgotten RAF Force that Won the Battle of the Atlantic

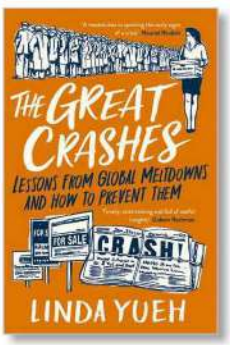
By Leo McKinstry
John Murray, £25, hardback, 336 pages

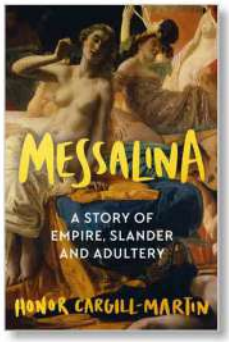
Nicknamed the 'Cinderella service' because of the way in which its efforts were eclipsed by Bomber Command during World War II, the RAF's maritime Coastal Command wing actually played a crucial role in the Allied victory. That's the argument of Leo McKinstry, whose latest book charts how the organisation was able, by 1943, to decisively turn the tide of the battle of the Atlantic. Drawing on fresh sources, this is a typically detailed account from a renowned chronicler of the conflict.

The Great Crashes: Lessons from Global Meltdowns and How to Prevent Them

By Linda Yueh
Penguin Business, £22, hardback, 256 pages

Recent years have witnessed significant economic turbulence, both in the UK and around the world. Here, author and broadcaster Linda Yueh explores 10 previous financial emergencies – including the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the United States' 1980s loan crisis, and the day in 1992 famously dubbed 'Black Wednesday' – to chart their causes and consequences, and their lessons for today. It's sometimes involved, with lots of moving parts, but this is a revealing look at how the past might help avert similar situations in the future.





Messalina: A Story of Empire, Slander and Adultery

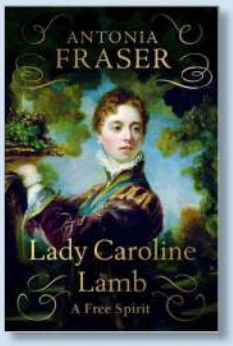
By Honor Cargill-Martin
Apollo, £27.99, hardback, 432 pages

First-century Roman empress Messalina has become renowned for her supposed deviousness and promiscuity, with lurid tales being passed down the generations of how she plotted against her husband, Claudius, and regularly frequented local brothels. But how much of this is true, and how much is unfair slander by male historians? This new biography sets out to unpick history from hatchet job and offer instead a clear-eyed look at the challenges and complexities of being a female ruler in the ancient world.

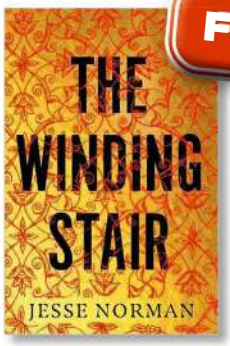
Lady Caroline Lamb: A Free Spirit

By Antonia Fraser
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25, hardback, 224 pages

Skilled in art and literature, fluently multilingual, and with a broad rebellious streak that led her to scandalise Georgian high society, Lady Caroline Lamb is ideal fodder for biographers – and Antonia Fraser turns to her subject with relish. From Lamb's childhood and family to her extramarital affairs, most notably with poet Lord Byron, Fraser vividly sketches a highly driven, highly intelligent woman who outpaced the opportunities offered by the times in which she lived.



FICTION



The Winding Stair

By Jesse Norman
Biteback Publishing, £20, hardback, 480 pages

Delving deep into the courtly intrigue and palace power struggles of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, MP-turned-author Jesse Norman's debut novel is both a dynamic political thriller and an evocative character study. Inspired by real events, the story examines the fierce rivalry between statesmen Francis Bacon and Edward Coke, who had very different ideas about the direction the nation should take under England's new monarch, King James I.

PODCAST WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of the best new podcast episodes from the BBC and HistoryExtra

You're Dead to Me: Leonardo da Vinci

bit.ly/LeoPod122

This instalment of Greg Jenner's popular podcast tackles archetypal Renaissance man Leonardo da Vinci. And, because it's a special live episode, he's joined not only by an expert and a comedian – Catherine Fletcher and Dara Ó Briain – but also an orchestra and audience, offering a looser spin on the finely honed *You're Dead to Me* format.

Everything you wanted to know: Britain in the 1990s

bit.ly/90sBritainPod122

It may, for some of us, only seem five minutes ago, but the 1990s now definitively counts as history. That's the verdict of the author and historian Alwyn Turner, who here tackles social media questions and popular internet search queries on the decade of poll tax riots and IRA bombings, the shift to Labour, and the rise of 'girl power'.

Keeping time: a watchmaker's history

bit.ly/TimePod122

How has the tick of the clock, the buzzing of the alarm, and the furtive check of the watch shaped how we see time and the world around us? Those are the questions at the heart of this conversation with watchmaker, restorer and historian Rebecca Struthers, who reveals the extent to which timepieces have revolutionised everything from work to travel.

ON THE PODCAST

CURATED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST ARCHIVE

14 PODCAST EPISODES ABOUT THE TUDORS TO STREAM NOW

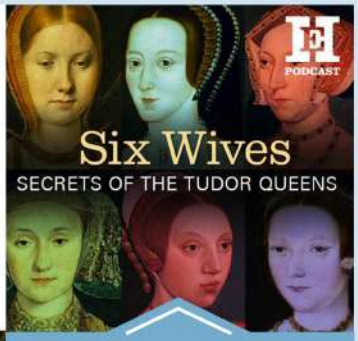
Want to learn more about the lives of the Tudors? We've rounded up some of the best *HistoryExtra* podcast episodes about the famed royal dynasty, including a six-part series that delves into the stories of each of Henry VIII's wives

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE TUDORS, BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Take a whistle-stop tour through the Tudor period with historian and author Tracy Borman, who in this episode responds to listener queries about the 16th-century English royal dynasty.

THE TRAGEDY OF LADY JANE GREY

She was put on the throne by her scheming father-in-law, deposed by her power-hungry cousin and condemned to death by her own father's tears. In this episode, Helen Castor describes the short life and reign of England's 'Nine Days Queen', Lady Jane Grey.



THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BOLEYNS

Anne Boleyn is the most famous of Henry VIII's six wives, but what do we know about her father and brother? Lauren Mackay charts the lives of Thomas and George Boleyn and asks whether portrayals of the pair in novels and television series are accurate.

SIX WIVES: SECRETS OF THE TUDOR QUEENS

This six-part series looks at the lives of Henry VIII's wives – from Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon to 'survivor' Katherine Parr. *HistoryExtra* subscribers also get access to an accompanying video series – for details, visit *historyextra.com/six-wives-pod*.

BLACK TUDORS

Miranda Kaufmann explores the lives of the Africans who made England their home in the 16th century – from the court musician who persuaded Henry VIII to give him a handsome pay rise, to the family man who profited from high society's passion for silk stockings.

ELIZABETH OF YORK

She was a founder of the Tudor dynasty and mother to one of England's most notorious kings, Henry VIII. Yet, argues Alison Weir, Elizabeth of York remains an underestimated queen in her own right. Here, the author discusses why Elizabeth is so often overlooked.

DIRTY TUDORS

Rotting vegetation, dung heaps and overflowing cesspits were just some of the unpleasant daily realities faced by ordinary people in 16th-century England. Here, historian Pamela Hartshorne reveals the challenges the Tudors faced when trying to keep their cities clean and hygienic.

THOMAS CROMWELL RECONSIDERED

Thomas Cromwell is one of the most talked-about figures of the Tudor age. In this 2018 episode, Diarmaid MacCulloch discusses Cromwell's life and his relationships with Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn and the European Protestant movement.

JANE SEYMOUR: THE KING'S FAVOURITE QUEEN

In 1537, Jane Seymour bore Henry VIII his long-awaited male heir, Edward. Bestselling author Alison Weir examines Jane's life and tragic death, and explains why Jane provided such a fascinating character study for her 2018 novel, *The Haunted Queen*.

HISTORY EXTRA PODCAST

To hear these episodes, plus hundreds of others covering a wealth of historical topics, visit *historyextra.com/podcast*. You can also listen on platforms such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

GETTY IMAGES X5, ALAMY X1

CROSSWORD

TEST YOURSELF WITH OUR HISTORICAL PUZZLE EVERY ISSUE

CROSSWORD No. 122

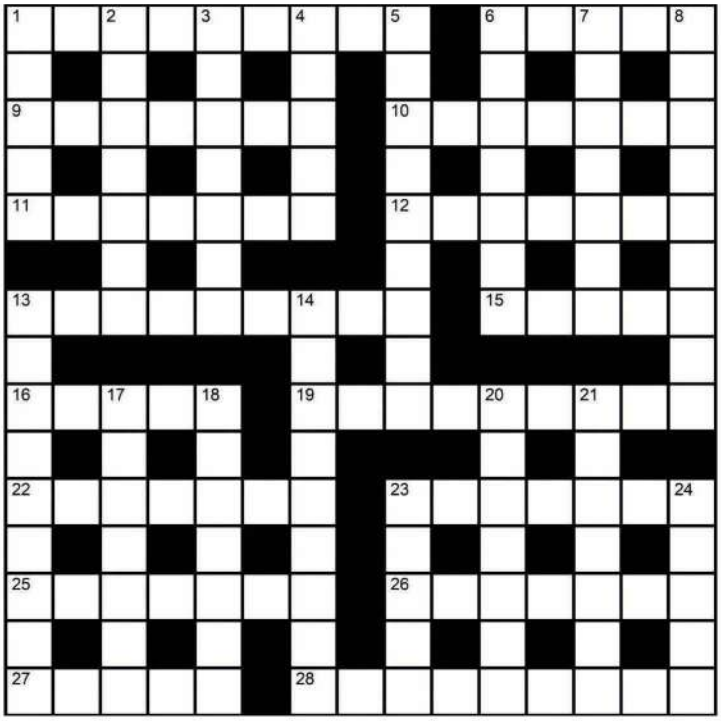
Test your history knowledge to solve our prize puzzle – and you could win a fantastic new book

ACROSS

1 Rank in certain orders of knighthood (9)
6 Jousting fields (5)
9 Grunge band formed in Washington state in 1987 (7)
10 Queen Consort (b1947), wife of Charles III (7)
11 US city ravaged by fire in 1871 (7)
12 "The ___ are rather a foul-mouthed nation" – William Hazlitt, 1822 (7)
13 15th-century Italian explorer (4,5)
15 Historically, a native of coastal Germania (5)
16 Lord ___ (1732–92), prime minister under George III (5)
19 Mikhail ___ (1814–41), Russian poet and novelist (9)
22 Mary ___ (1797–1851), author of *Frankenstein* (1818) (7)
23 Ancient form of paper, first used in Egypt (7)
25 Catholic Church institution founded in 1928 (4,3)
26 Evelyn ___ (b1965), Scottish percussionist (7)
27 Lover of Bill Sikes in *Oliver Twist* (1838) (5)
28 Arnold ___ (1882–1928), US gambler and racketeer (9)

DOWN

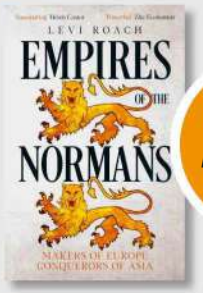
1 Follower of Diogenes, perhaps (5)
2 Paul ___ (1854–1915), Nobel Prize-winning physician (7)
3 Ancient language of Syria and Mesopotamia (7)
4 *My Own Private* ___, 1991 film by Gus Van Sant (5)
5 Earl of ___, title of the poet John Wilmot (1647–80) (9)



Set by Richard Smyth

6 Historic French city, known to the Romans as Augustoritum (7)
7 Trumpet-like instrument, in ancient Greece (7)
8 Alexei ___ (1906–77), celebrated coalminer of the Soviet Union (9)
13 Notorious cult settlement in Guyana (9)
14 1959 novel by Keith Waterhouse (5,4)
17 Henry ___ (1756–1823), Scottish portrait painter (7)
18 Billie ___ (1915–59), US jazz and swing singer (7)
20 In Greek myth, the husband of Eurydice (7)
21 Roman-African playwright of the second century BC (7)
23 Pierre ___ (1620–94), French Baroque painter and architect (5)
24 Getrude ___ (1874–1946), US Modernist writer (5)

CHANCE TO WIN



BOOK WORTH £12.99 FOR THREE WINNERS

Empires of the Normans
by Levi Roach

HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **BBC History Revealed, July 2023 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **july2023@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk** by noon on **1 August 2023**.

By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in the box below. Immediate Media Co Ltd, publishers of *BBC History Revealed*, would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Co Group. Please write 'Do Not Contact IMC' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. If you would like to receive this information by email, please write your email address on the entry. You may unsubscribe from receiving these messages at any time. For more about the Immediate Privacy Policy, see the box below.
Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ☐ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy*

SOLUTION Nº 120

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

The competition is open to all UK residents (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Co London Ltd employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry per person.

The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of ***BBC History Revealed***) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy. The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 28 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.
Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England. Promoter: Immediate Media Company London Limited

LETTERS

A painting depicts Napoleon meeting Louise of Prussia in 1807. One *BBC History Revealed* reader felt our Essential Guide to the Napoleonic Wars was lacking in content about queens during the conflict

MISSING QUEENS

I was stunned that your article on women in the Napoleonic Wars (Essential Guide, June 2023) neglected to mention queens' roles in the conflict beyond Joséphine Bonaparte's influence on fashion and dynastic image (which were not her only spheres). Louise of Prussia and Maria Carolina of Naples both strongly opposed Napoleon Bonaparte, and Maria Feodorovna, mother of Tsar Alexander, made her court a centre of anti-Napoleonic sentiment and pressured her son to make a deal to spare Russian lives. (Indeed, I would recommend reading Waltraud Maierhofer's book *Women Against Napoleon*, which is excellent on the topic).

I did enjoy reading the section on women on the battlefield, but the female writers who opposed Napoleon could have been mentioned more, as could aristocratic women's efforts beyond raising morale.

C Tetzlaff, by email

Editor replies:

Thank you for your comments. You're absolutely right that we could have expanded the topic of women in the Napoleonic Wars a lot further. For reasons of space we decided to focus on women on the battlefield whose stories are perhaps less well-known, but it's a subject I very much hope to return to in the future.

LEADING THE WAY

Nige Tassell's article about the life of Tenzing Norgay (Spotlight, June 2023) made me reflect on just how much mountaineering has evolved in recent years.

Since Hillary and Norgay conquered Everest in 1953 more than 6,000 climbers have emulated their achievement, and in 2018 alone a record 800 climbers made it to the top.

In 2004 Sherpa Pemba Dorje climbed Everest from base camp to summit in just over eight hours, and in 2019 the Nepalese Kami Rita Sherpa, 49, reached the summit for the second time in a week, completing his 24th ascent overall. He said he felt healthy and hoped to carry on climbing until he was 60 years old. "With oxygen it's no big deal," he added.

American Jordan Romero was only 13 when he reached the summit with his parents and three Sherpas in 2010. Having reached the peak, he carried out a Skype interview and phoned his mother.

Everest is now included on the bucket-list of things to do for many thousands of tourists, but the risks remain, too. Nearly 300 people have been killed on the mountain.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

In 2010, 13-year-old Jordan Romero became the youngest person to conquer Everest – a record that still stands today

GETTY IMAGES X1, ALAMY X1

NEXT ISSUE

••• ON SALE 6 JULY •••

MEDIEVAL WOMEN

Discover what life was like for women in the Middle Ages – from childbirth and the home, to work and leisure

PLUS... SECRETS AND MYTHS OF THE YETI SPOTLIGHT ON POET AND PAINTER WILLIAM BLAKE **CHEVALIER D'ÉON, THE FRENCH SECRET AGENT WHO LIVED AS A WOMAN** LIFE HACKS FROM HISTORY **IN A NUTSHELL: THE TROJAN WAR** AND MUCH MORE...

CROSSWORD WINNERS

The three lucky winners of the prize crossword in issue 119 are as follows:

M Berry, North Yorkshire
T Dugdill, West Yorkshire
B Murtagh, West Sussex

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *What the Greeks Did for Us* by Antony Spawforth.

We will post your prizes out as soon as possible.

CONTACT US

facebook.com/HistoryExtra twitter.com/HistoryExtra @HistoryExtra

EMAIL US: haveyoursay@historyrevealed.com
OR POST: Have Your Say, BBC History Revealed, Immediate Media, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4ST

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:

PHONE: 03330 162 116
EMAIL VIA: *www.buysubscriptions.com/contactus*
OR POST: BBC History Revealed, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF
EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES: 0117 927 9009

OVERSEAS: In the US/Canada you can contact us at:
Immediate Media, PO Box 401, Williamsport, PA 17703, USA
PHONE: Toll-free 888-941-5623
EMAIL VIA: immediatemedia@buysubscriptions.com

BBC HISTORY REVEALED

ISSUE 122 – JULY 2023
BBC History Revealed is published by Immediate Media Company London Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes

EDITORIAL
Editor Charlotte Hodgman
charlotte.hodgman@immediate.co.uk
Production Editor Jon Bauckham
Staff Writer Danny Bird
Art Editor Sheu-Kuei Ho

DIGITAL
Digital Editor Elinor Evans
elinor.evans@immediate.co.uk
Deputy Digital Editor Kev Lochun
Premium Content Editor Rachel Dinning
Podcast Editor Ellie Cawthorne

CONTRIBUTORS & EXPERTS
Paul Bloomfield, Rowena Cockett, Michael Cocks, Rhiannon Davies, Matt Elton, Taff Gillingham, Peter Hart, Yuriko Jackall, Spencer Mizen, Lisa Moses, Tanya Oliver, Gordon O'Sullivan, Adrian Pearce, Justin Pollard, Everett Sharp, Richard Smyth, Nige Tassell, Daniel Watkins, Jonny Wilkes, Jonathan Wright

PRESS & PR
Communications Manager
Natasha Lee *natasha.lee@immediate.co.uk*

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager John Lawton

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Advertisement Manager
Sam Jones 0117 300 8145
sam.jones@immediate.co.uk
Senior Brand Sales Executive
Sam Evanson 0117 300 8544
Brand Sales Executive
Sarah Luscombe 0117 300 8530
Group Direct Marketing Manager
Laurence Robertson 00353 5787 57444
Subscriptions Director
Jacky Perales-Morris
Subscriptions Marketing Manager
Sally Longstaff
Direct Marketing Manager
Aisha Babb
US Representative
Kate Buckley *buckley@buckleypell.com*

PRODUCTION
Production Director Sarah Powell
Production Coordinator Holly Donmall
Ad Coordinator Charles Thurlow
Ad Designer Julia Young

PUBLISHING
Content Director David Musgrove
Commercial Director Jemima Dixon
CEO Sean Cornwell
CFO & COO Dan Constanda
Chairman Tom Bureau

BBC STUDIOS, UK PUBLISHING
Chair, Editorial Review Boards
Nicholas Brett
Managing Director, Consumer Products and Licensing Stephen Davies
Director, Magazines and Consumer Products Mandy Thwaites
Compliance Manager
Cameron McEwan *uk.publishing@bbc.com*

Basic annual subscription rates
UK £64.87 **Eire/Europe** £67.99
ROW £69.00

IMMEDIATE MEDIA CO

© **Immediate Media Company London Limited.** All rights reserved. No part of *BBC History Revealed* may be reproduced in any form or by any means either wholly or in part, without prior written permission of the publisher. Not to be resold, lent, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade at more than the recommended retail price or in mutilated condition. Printed in the UK by William Gibbons Ltd. The publisher, editor and authors accept no responsibility in respect of any products, goods or services which may be advertised or referred to in this issue or for any errors, omissions, misstatements or mistakes in any such advertisements or references.

recycle ipso Regulated

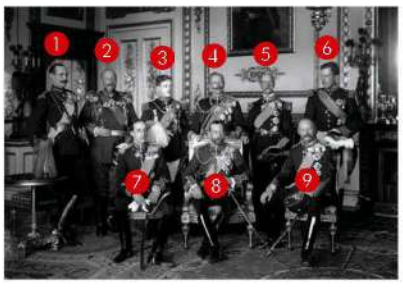
GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO FINISH

ARRESTING IMAGES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE PAST

A REGAL GATHERING 1910

Dressed in full military attire, the kings of the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Greece, Belgium, Portugal, Norway and Bulgaria gather for a remarkable group photograph while attending the funeral of Edward VII at Windsor Castle on 20 May 1910. United in their grief, the monarchs were all either related by blood or through marriage to the new British sovereign, George V (*seated, centre*). The occasion marked the last great gathering of European royals before the outbreak of World War I in 1914; the conflict ultimately destabilised, and in many cases destroyed, the thrones of several European monarchies.



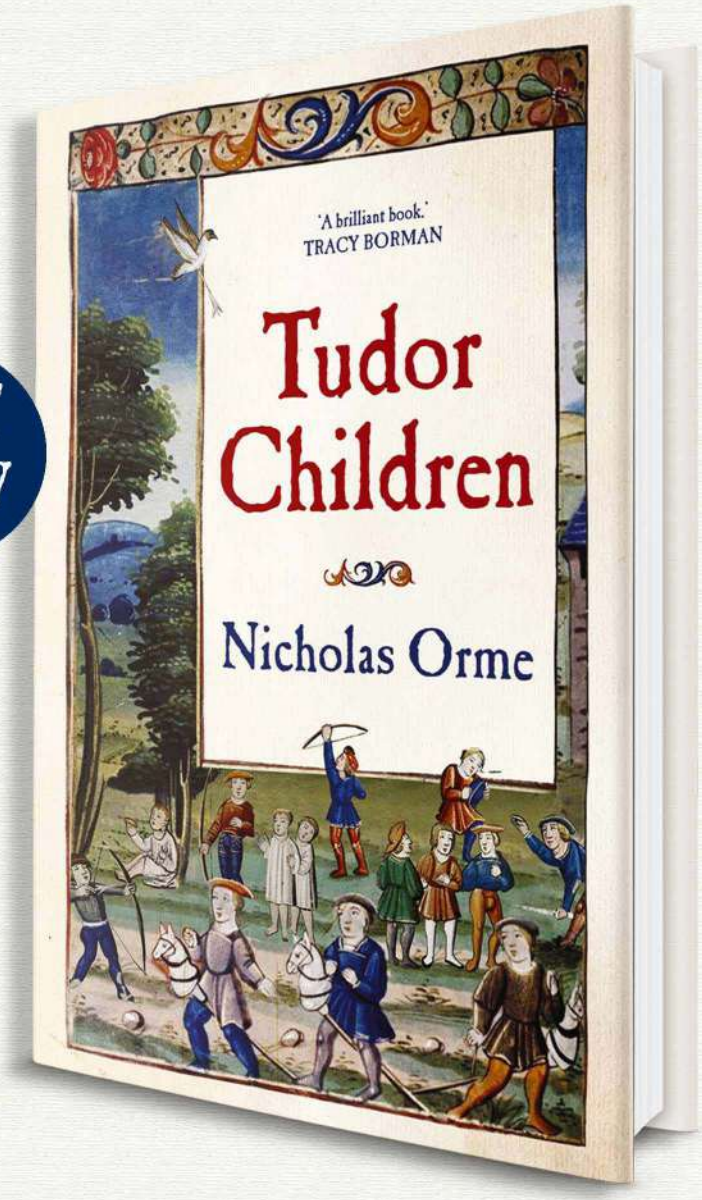
1. Haakon VII of Norway
2. Ferdinand of Bulgaria
3. Manuel II of Portugal
4. Wilhelm II of Germany
5. George I of Greece
6. Albert I of Belgium
7. Alfonso XIII of Spain
8. George V of the United Kingdom
9. Frederick VIII of Denmark

GETTY IMAGES

'Social history at its best ...
by connecting with our own history as children, Orme invites us to embrace a new way of engaging with the past'

JOANNE PAUL, *The Times*

OUT NOW



'Lavishly illustrated'

IAN SANSOM, *The Telegraph*

'Elegant and hugely enjoyable'

KATHRYN HUGHES, *Sunday Times*

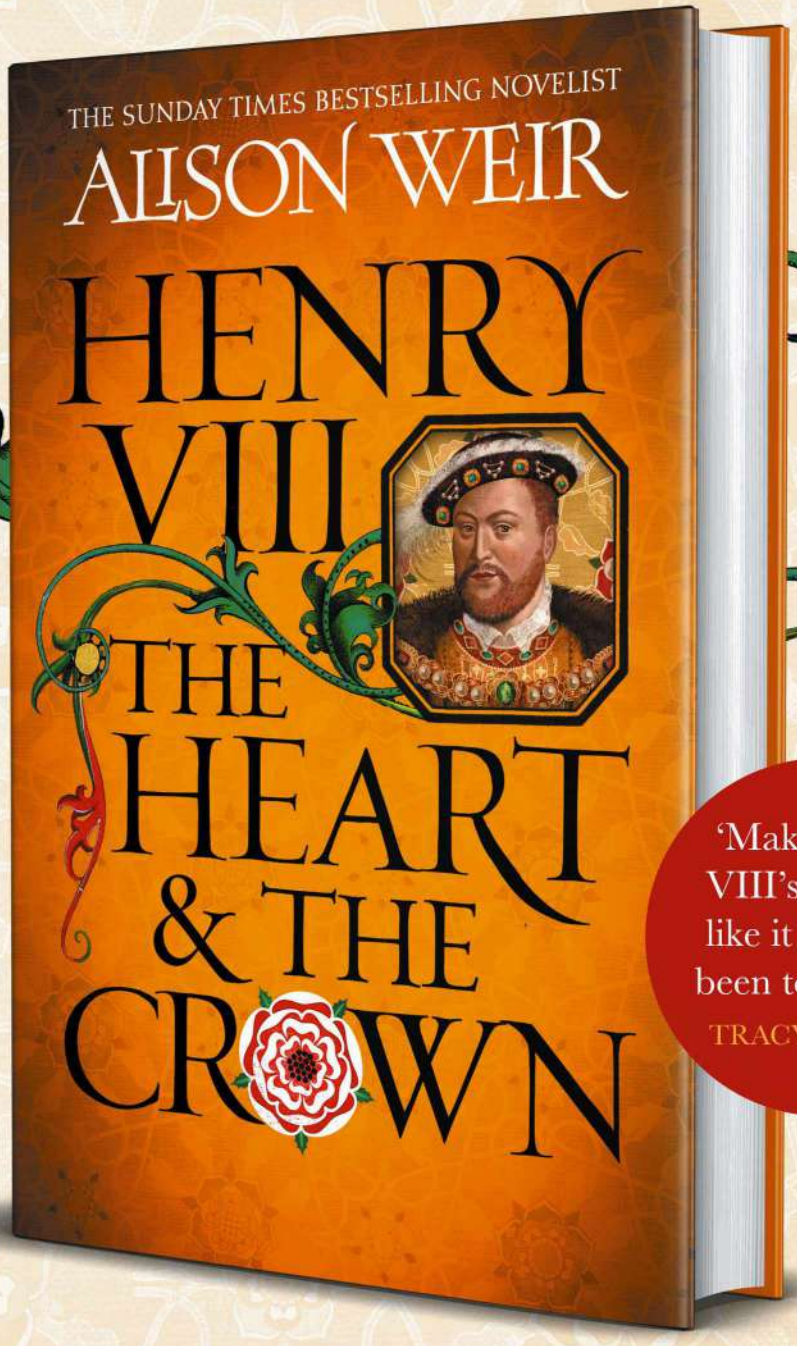
'The missing piece of the Tudor jigsaw'

TRACY BORMAN, author of *The Private Lives of the Tudors*

Yale UNIVERSITY PRESS | yalebooks.co.uk

SIX WIVES. ONE KING.

THIS IS THE STORY YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...



'Makes Henry VIII's story feel like it has never been told before'
TRACY BORMAN

THE MAGNIFICENT NEW TUDOR NOVEL
FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE SUNDAY TIMES-BESTSELLING
SIX TUDOR QUEENS SERIES ALISON WEIR